A

HISTORY

OF

THE LIFE

OF

EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE,

AND OF

VARIOUS EVENTS CONNECTED THEREWITH,

WHICH OCCURRED DURING THE REIGN OF EDWARD III.
KING OF ENGLAND.

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THE

HISTORY



OF

EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

CHAPTER I.

PROCEEDINGS ON THE BORDERS OF SCOTLAND.—DAVID BRUCE INVADES ENGLAND.—PREPARATIONS OF PHILIPPA.—BATTLE OF NEVILLE'S CROSS, AND CAPTURE OF DAVID BRUCE.—THE POPE ENDEAVOURS TO PROCURE A PEACE.—PROCEEDINGS OF THE ENGLISH PARLIAMENT.—NEGOTIATIONS WITH FLANDERS.—THE COUNT OF FLANDERS AFFIANCED TO THE PRINCESS ISABELLA OF ENGLAND.—HE ESCAPES BY STRATAGEM FROM HIS TURBULENT SUBJECTS.—PHILIP OF VALOIS ENDEAVOURS TO GAIN THE FLEMINGS.—THEY ADHERE TO ENGLAND.—MEETING OF THE STATES AT PARIS.—CONTINUATION OF THE SIEGE OF CALAIS.—LETTER OF THE GOVERNOR.

WHILE the Earl of Lancaster was pursuing his victorious course in Aquitaine, and while Edward still maintained a strict blockade upon Calais, the negotiations carried on by Philip of Valois in Scotland began to make themselves felt in their effects. Never did a more favourable occasion present itself for recovering all that Scotland had lost than at that moment. Edward himself, leading one great army through France, and his generals in Britanny and Guyenne employing two other considerable bodies in active warfare, left England, though not without defence, at least without the power of interfering with the internal transactions of the neighbouring country. The very facilities, however, which this state of things presented, tended to

carry the boldness of the Scottish counsels into rashness. Immense levies were made in various parts of the country, and David Bruce, finding himself at the head of more than 50,000 men, determined upon seeking temporary revenge, instead of obtaining permanent security. He might have freed Scotland, but he chose rather to ravage England. The truce between the two countries had been already broken before the battle of Cressy; and a hostile incursion from the north, apparently crowned with success, had spread terror and devastation over a considerable part of the English border.*

The pressing demands of Philip for a diversion in his favour, and the news that fresh levies were every day drawn from England to swell the assailants of Calais, might afford a chivalrous pretence for an unwise enterprise; but it was probably the augury of one successful expedition which induced the Scottish monarch to risk his whole fortunes upon a second. In the beginning of October, 1346, he began his march, and entered the pale of England. Ravaging the country as he proceeded, the King of Scotland advanced into the county palatine of Durham; and a multitude of excesses, the massacres of priests, peasantry, women, and children, are attributed to himself and to his followers by English historians, which, fortunately for the honour of human nature, are by no means proved. His progress received little obstruction, till he arrived in the immediate vicinity of Durham; but the English council and the lords of the English marches had not been ignorant of his approach, or negligent in providing the means of opposition. The former incursion, which had announced the rupture of the truce, had put the queen and the government upon their guard; and orders had been issued in the end of August for calling out the array of the border counties.

Tidings of great military preparations in Scotland had rendered the measures of the English court more pressing and energetic from day to day; and at length the queen herself,† finding that a more serious invasion of the country

* Rymer, tom. ii. part iv. p. 201.
† Froissart is the only authority, I believe, who states positively

than had taken place for many years was upon the point of execution, is said to have hastened into Northumberland, in order to encourage the nobles and soldiers of the border by her presence and example. Nor were the barons at all tardy in seconding her efforts; and the Archbishop of York, the Bishop of Durham, the Lords of Percy, Umfraville, Neville, Mowbray, Lucy, Rokeby and De Gray, called the whole country north of Trent to arms, and marched with increasing numbers to meet the invader.* The two armies encountered each other at Neville's Cross, within a short distance of Durham; and the battle commenced with more than the ordinary portion of animosity on both sides.†

The English forces were far inferior in number to the Scots; and both were actuated by equal hate and inspired with equal courage: but skill was upon the side of England. The Scots had embarrassed themselves amongst enclosed grounds, in which the superiority of their numbers could not be rendered available; their advance guard fell in with the English before they were aware, and suffered a complete defeat; and ere the men-at-arms could be brought to act, the galling arrows of the English archers had carried terror and dismay into many parts of the Scottish ranks. Sir John Graham, indeed, attempted the same manœuvre as that which had turned the fortune of Bannockburn; but the Scottish position had not been chosen with

that Philippa was present herself on this occasion; and from that circumstance his account has not only been doubted, but its accuracy has been positively denied. In examining the chapters, however, which refer to this subject, I find him so accurate in regard to all the persons holding a command in the English army, so completely borne out by the state papers in a thousand particulars, that, in the absence of all proof that Philippa was not there, I should at once receive his narrative on that point, even were it not supported by very strong collateral reasons for believing it to be correct. We must also remember that this very book was presented to Philippa herself by the historian who possessed every means of information. Against all these reasons for giving credit to the account of Froissart, however, we must place the extraordinary fact of the contemporary poet Laurence Minot never having once mentioned Philippa in his account of the defeat of David Bruce at Neville's Cross.

* Rymer, tom. ii. part iv. p. 206.

† Froissart, chap. cccvi.

the wisdom of a Robert the Bruce. The charge of the gallant knight on the flank of the adverse archers could only be effected imperfectly; and in the *mêlée* which ensued, though a very considerable loss was sustained by the English, the Scots were completely defeated.

One body, commanded by the Earl of March, made its retreat in good order; but from 15,000 to 20,000 brave men were left dead upon the field of battle, and an extraordinary number of noble prisoners fell into the hands of the English.* Of these the chief was David Bruce the King of Scotland. Wounded in several places, and fighting on foot like a common soldier, he was assailed by a border leader named John Copland, who, after a severe struggle with the unhappy monarch, in which the king with a blow of his dagger dashed out two of his adversary's teeth, succeeded in taking him prisoner, and, accompanied by about twenty followers, carried him safe out of the battle. Such was the victory of Neville's Cross;†

* It would appear from the State Papers (vol. iii. part i. p. 6), that the Earls of Fife and Monteith were tried for having borne arms against England and against Baliol, *after having sworn fealty to Edward and to that prince.* The Earl of Fife was pardoned on account of his consanguinity to the king, but the Earl of Monteith was ordered for execution. We find but rare examples in the civil wars of the fourteenth century, even in the fiercest struggles, of persons being murdered, with the mockery of justice, after surrender, on the pretence of being taken in arms against their prince. This extension of the horrors of war to cold-blooded slaughter after the heat of strife is over, is a modern improvement. Whenever we do find a prisoner executed, it was upon the accusation of having quitted that cause to which he had vowed adherence, and not upon his having wrongly or mistakenly chosen his side at first.

† This battle is generally said to have been fought on the 17th of October 1346: but a mistake may have occurred somewhere in regard to the day; for it is evident from a paper in Rymer (tom. ii. part iv. p. 206), that news of the fight and its success had reached London on the 20th of that month; and, as the name of Copland is found amongst those to whom the thanks of the council are given, it is clear likewise that his capture of the king was known at that time, as he was evidently not one of those to whom such a letter would have been addressed had he not performed some new and extraordinary service.

It may not be unnecessary to remark that Barnes is probably wrong in stating that a part of the army besieging Calais was sent

and the expedition which was intended to act as a diversion in favour of Philip of Valois, and by the danger of England to withdraw Edward from France, only served to render the cause of the French king more desperate, and to extend and strengthen the power of his adversary.

David Bruce remained for some months in the custody of John Copland, who refused to deliver him to any one without the express command of the king; but an order to that effect having been at length received by the borderer, the unfortunate monarch was placed in the hands of Thomas of Rokeby, who conveyed him to the Tower of London on the 2d of January 1347.* His captor, however, was not left without a reward proportioned to the importance of the prisoner; and we find that he was immediately raised to the rank of banneret, while the sum of 500*l*. per annum† was assigned him for the purpose of supporting his new dignity. At the same time, Edward gave him another testimony of his gratitude, which was probably very necessary to a border rider of those days; namely, a free pardon for all murders, felonies, robberies, thefts, and acts of receiving stolen goods which the newly created banneret had committed, up to the period of his late advancement.‡

While Philippa, crowned with victory, made every arrangement for securing the internal tranquillity of England, and prepared to pass the sea and carry the joy of her presence to her husband and her son, the siege of Calais proceeded slowly but steadily towards its conclusion. Seven

to England to aid in opposing the Scots; for we find that, at this very time, Edward was himself drawing large reinforcements from his own country.

* Rymer, vol. ii. part i. p. 2.

† Equivalent to more than 6000*l*. per annum of our present money.

‡ Froissart declares that John Copland refusing in direct terms to deliver the King of Scotland to the queen, Philippa despatched messengers to her husband complaining of this act of disrespect; but Edward having commanded the borderer to yield up his prisoner and appear before him at Calais, recompensed his services, and gave a special pardon for the offence he had committed against the queen. The only pardon, however, which I can find recorded is that which I have stated above, and which is to be met with in Rymer.

hundred English vessels swept the narrow seas; but notwithstanding their continual watchfulness, from time to time some of the daring mariners of Boulogne and Abbeville contrived in their small barks to elude pursuit and throw a scanty supply into the besieged place. However insignificant was the assistance thus received, such aid is never without its effect in keeping up hope, one of the most valuable of props to the minds of men in the situation of the garrison of Calais. In the mean while no exertions were spared by the King of France to relieve his besieged subjects by any means that might suggest themselves. Negotiations for peace were once more resorted to under the mediation of the pope; and before the blockade of Calais had continued two months, the Cardinals of Naples and Clermont* appeared in Edward's camp, bearing letters from the supreme pontiff. The English monarch immediately appointed several peers to treat, according to the prayer of the cardinals; but he slackened none of his measures against Calais, and Philip on his part relaxed no effort to relieve the garrison by stratagem or force.

In the mean while a parliament was held at Westminster,† which liberally provided for the wants of the king and the expenses of the war; but at the same time remonstrated boldly and vigorously against those extensions of the royal prerogative of which Edward was too frequently guilty, noticing especially the commissions of array by which he drained the country of its population, and the custom of 40*s*. on the sack of wool, which had been imposed, it would appear, without the sanction of parliament.

* Rymer, tom. ii. part iv. p. 206.

† Barnes has attributed to this period the design of invading England, which, as I have before mentioned, was entertained by the Normans in 1337, 1338. He has been led into this mistake by the fact that a copy of the convention between the Normans and the French was found at the taking of Caen by Edward, and by him laid before parliament, about this time, in order probably to show what the country had escaped by his successful campaigns: Had Barnes looked into Robert of Avesbury, he would have found the document at large (p. 131, &c.), and would have perceived that it referred to a period far anterior to the siege of Calais. It is also preserved in Rymer (tom. ii. part iv. p. 197), but bearing date 1338.

An endeavour was also made to restrict the power of the monarch in regard to the application of the sums voted. The remonstrances of the parliament were wise and well-timed, inasmuch as precedents are often established, in the exigency of war, which are dangerous in peace, and as resistance in the commencement of evils is always more moderate and equitable than afterwards when evils have intertwined themselves with privileges, and opposition, by long contest, has acquired the intemperance of faction. The endeavour to control the application of the money on the other hand, was more than injudicious; and while the king evaded the remonstrances of the parliament on the two former points, he strenuously resisted the last named attempt, well knowing that opportunities of action and prospects of success would be lost for ever, if he waited the slow determinations of the tardy and ignorant men who at that time formed the commons of England.* Besides the general supply granted for carrying on the war, Edward demanded and received a feudal due which, though submitted to parliament in a country where the system of popular representation was already firmly established, as in England, was a general right claimed by every sovereign lord. This tax, called an aid, was levied when the eldest son of the king received knighthood, and amounted by law to the sum of 40*s.* on every knight's fee throughout the land. The lords who accompanied the king on his expedition certified the fact, and means were immediately taken for collecting the large sum which became due on this account.†

While he thus obtained support from his native subjects, Edward in no degree slackened his endeavours to strengthen his relations with foreign states, opposed as he was to an enemy possessing the inexhaustible resources which ever

* Many instances have been given of the ignorance of the representatives of the commons about this time; but they seem to have been imbued with just notions in regard to the rights and liberties of the people, and to have joined with the nobles and the clergy, who were always the first defenders of our civil liberty, in resisting the undue extension of the royal prerogative.

† This was one of the feudal dues reserved and sanctioned by Magna Charta. See Hallam; Middle Ages, vol. i. p. 134.

lie open to the hands of a King of France. In preserving his alliance with the people of Flanders he had already been wonderfully successful, and his exertions were indefatigable to hurry forward the negotiations, which were now in progress, to such a point, that the interests of Belgium and England should be still more strongly united by the marriage of his daughter to the youthful sovereign of that country. The Flemings themselves seconded his desires, as far as lay in their power; and the confinement to which the young Count of Flanders was subjected in his own land became so painful to the spirit of an active and lively youth, that at length, for the sake of greater liberty, he affected to lose his abhorrence of the English alliance, and to yield himself to the counsels of the subjects who had now become his gaolers. This conduct produced so happy an effect that he pursued the system of concession, without doubt laying out in his own mind a plan for escaping from the tedious thraldom in which he was held. The King of England pressed the citizens to conclude the espousals; the citizens expressed their anxious desires that the count should accede; and the count, to their surprise, offered no opposition to the design.*

A day was accordingly appointed for a meeting of the court of England with the councils of the good towns; and the city of Bergues, near Dunkirk, was named as the rendezvous.† Philippa had already arrived at the camp of her husband, accompanied by her daughter Isabella; and, on the 1st of March, 1347, Edward repaired in royal pomp to the place of assembly, where he was met by all the chief citizens of Flanders, bringing with them their young lord in a state of splendid captivity. The count suffered himself to be managed as a mere machine. Edward, on his part, did all that a king could do to win the regard of the young prince; and Philippa spared no pains to court and prepossess the future husband of her daughter. Two days passed in festivity and rejoicings; and on the third, Louis de Male, Count of Flanders, solemnly affianced Isabella of England, and promised under his hand to espouse her in the face of the church within a fortnight after Easter.

* Meyer, Ann. Fland. fol. 151. Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 8.
† Froissart, chap. ccxi.

The two courts then separated; and, while Edward made great preparations for giving splendour to the approaching nuptials of his daughter, the young count returned to his own territories, apparently well satisfied with his reception by the King of England, and perfectly contented with the alliance proposed. The worthy burghers of Flanders suffered themselves to be deceived by the apparent conversion of their young lord; and as the time appointed for his marriage approached, they relaxed the vigilance with which they watched him, and suffered him, though accompanied by creatures of their own, to seek the pleasures of the hunting field. One day, however, during the very week in the course of which his promised marriage was to be consummated, the count rode out to fly his falcons by the river side, or, as it was then called, *pour aller en riviere.* After a time, a heron was raised, and the count's falconer slipped the gesses of his bird. The count himself flew his falcon also, and affecting to be carried away by the sport, galloped on shouting and cheering on the hawks. The falconer and the other attendants followed more slowly; and spurring on without pause, the count gradually left them behind, escaped from their sight, and, turning his bridle towards Artois, never drew a rein till he was within the pale of France.* His reception by Philip was such as he expected and desired; but the effect of his evasion upon the affairs of France was anything but favourable. Edward, though highly resenting the conduct of the count himself, was a great deal too wise to include the Flemings, who had been deceived like himself, in his anger; and they on their part, gratified by the confidence of the English king, and anxious to show that it was deserved, made strenuous exertions to serve him more effectually than they had hitherto done. An army was almost immediately raised by the cities; and being joined by a small detachment of English troops, lay upon the frontiers of Artois,† effecting a strong diversion in favour of the force besieging Calais.

But perhaps the best proof of their zeal and sincerity in

* Jac. Meyer, Ann. Fland. fol. 151. Froissart, chap. cccxi. Chron. de France, chap. xl.

† Froissart, chap. cccxv.

favour of England, was their rejection of the splendid proposals made by Philip in order to induce them to return to an alliance with France. Everything that might move a commercial people was offered and refused. The monarch proposed at once to restore to Flanders the three large towns* which France had claimed and taken from the county;† to furnish Flanders for six years with corn at the rate of four sous for the measure, which was then commonly sold at twelve; to supply their manufactories with wool at their own price, and to ensure to them an exclusive right of selling cloth in France; to pardon the past; to raise the interdict; to provide for the youth of good condition, but inferior fortune; to defend them against all enemies; and to give them, as security for the accomplishment of all these promises, a large sum of money from his royal treasury.

Whether these proposals were distinctly made, whether the Flemings doubted the good faith of such extravagant proffers, or whether they saw both greater honour and advantage in adhering to the cause of England, cannot be absolutely entertained; but it is clear that they rejected steadily all the offers of the French monarch, and in reply only ravaged the frontiers of Artois.

With his own subjects Philip was more successful; and to the honour of France be it said, that all his reverses and defeats seemed but to increase the unanimity of his people, and strengthen the bonds between the monarch and his vassals. His weaknesses, and his losses might deprive him of the respect of his subjects, but their love for their king and for their country raised them up to repel the English; and though they were seldom willing to obey, they were always ready to fight and to support. A meeting of the States General was held at Paris on Palm Sunday; and the situation of the country, and the immediate means of opposing the progress of the enemy, were taken into consideration.‡ The first question was of course how to

* These were Lille, Bethune, and a third, which Robert of Avesbury calls Rowacum, though the third that they claimed was in reality Tournay.

† Robert of Avesbury, p. 153.

‡ 25th March. Barnes, p. 386. Villani, lib. xii. cap. 86.

raise money to carry on the war with vigour; and it would seem that all the most disgraceful and objectionable methods which man could devise were at once adopted without consideration. The treasurers and collectors of the revenue were subjected to rigorous examination, imprisoned, fined, and saw their property confiscated; the Lombards and other foreign bankers were seized and oppressed; the Jews were thrown into dungeons, tormented, and drained; and, in short, to use the quaint but appropriate terms of the old historian, "the golden sponge of oppression was now squeezed by the iron hand of law." The last sums which had been raised for the holy war were appropriated to the necessities of the moment, and the clergy themselves did not escape without bearing a share of the common exactions.

The nobility, however, taxed themselves to an immense amount, and declared their readiness to serve with their persons as well as their property; and Philip had the gratification of finding that a general unanimity of purpose, and an universal hatred to the English, pervaded the whole assembly.

Immediately after the close of the deliberations, the French king set out for Hesdin,* which place was appointed for the general muster of his army; but the very assembly which had been lately held in Paris had drawn the barons from their territories, and impeded the feudal levies on which Philip relied for military aid. The various reinforcements, therefore, came in but slowly; and weeks and months passed before he found himself in a condition to take the field.

In the mean while, Edward neglected not the opportunity afforded by this long delay of proceeding vigorously against the besieged city. Although his principal hope lay in the strictness of the blockade, yet he did not cease to harass the garrison by the employment of military engines; while cannon were used, though apparently with little effect, in battering the defences of the place. We have reason to believe that these destructive machines were at that time formed very much in the shape of the mortar

* Chron. de France, chap. xl.

in which the fatal invention of gunpowder was first accidentally discovered, and we may easily suppose that such a construction did not give great force to the balls which they projected, when no chamber was added to confine the expansion of the powder to one particular direction.

The walls of Calais resisted all the efforts of Edward's artillery; and it is more than probable that the only sufferings of the besieged proceeded from famine. In the seventh month of the siege, however, a bold manœuvre of the French fleet succeeded in deceiving the English admiral;* and thirty vessels filled with provisions made their way into the harbour, carrying joy and hope once more to the fainting hearts of the garrison.

To guard against such enterprises for the future, Edward immediately began the construction of a strong fort upon a small tongue of land at the mouth of the haven;† and from that moment no farther supplies of any consequence could be thrown into Calais. It was determined indeed to make the attempt shortly after, and a fleet put to sea, manned principally by Genoese; but news of the preparation of this convoy had reached the English camp, and the Earls of Northampton and Oxford, with Sir Walter de Mauny and several other officers, embarked on board the squadron then before Calais, and sailed to meet the enemy, whom they encountered near the mouth of the Somme.‡ The French fleet, consisting of forty-four vessels, was instantly dispersed. A number took refuge in Crotoy, and others got away by swift sailing; but twelve were driven on shore, and perished with all on board.

In the tower constructed by Edward at the entrance of the harbour, every machine then known for casting projectiles was employed; and we find from Froissart that espringals, bombards, and what he calls *arcs a tours*, were mingled on the walls; so that even the smaller boats were almost certain to be sunk in any attempt to introduce provisions into the besieged place. From that moment the famine became dreadful in Calais: bread was not to be procured; almost all the horses were devoured; dogs, cats, and

* Knighton, col. 2592. † Froissart, chap. cccxv.

‡ Robert of Avesbury, p. 155.

rats furnished food for the highest tables; and the most noisome objects were eagerly sought for and employed to support existence. These also were at length consumed; and provisions drew so near an end, that death in the most horrible of shapes began to present itself to the garrison. One dreadful alternative remained; but I cannot express the fearful state of mind to which the men of Calais were reduced better than by translating the last letter of the governor to the King of France:—

"Very dear and much redoubted lord,

"I commend myself to you as far as I may, the more as I much desire to hear of your condition, which our Lord of his grace ever maintain in well being. And should you desire to know the state of your town of Calais, be assured that, when this letter was written, we were all safe and well, and in great willingness to serve you and to do all for your honour and profit. But, very dear and much redoubted lord, you must know that, although our people are all safe and well, the town is in want of corn, and wine, and meat; for know that there is nothing that has not been all eaten, even to the dogs, the cats, and the horses; and in the town there is no food to be found, *unless we eat the flesh of our own people.* I formerly wrote to you, that I would hold out the town as long as we had anything to eat; but we are now at that point that we have no more food. Thus we have agreed amongst ourselves, that if we have not speedy aid, we will issue out of the town into the fields, and fight to live or to die; for we love better to die honourably in the field than the one to feed upon the other. Therefore, very dear and much redoubted lord, apply what remedy may seem meet to you; for if some remedy or advice be not speedily applied, you will never have letter more from me, and the town will be lost, with us who are therein. The Lord give you a happy life and long, and yield you the will, in case we die for you, to recompense our children!"*

This letter was intrusted to the master of a Genoese vessel, then in the harbour of Calais; and early in the

* Robert of Avesbury, pp. 156, 157.

morning, in company with another ship, he slipped his cable, got past the fort, and out to sea. He was soon perceived, however, by the commanders of some English vessels returning towards Calais, who immediately gave chase. The French ship effected its return with difficulty to the port; the Genoese made all sail, but in his flight he kept too near the land, and struck on a shoal. All on board were taken; but, prior to his capture, the master had tied the letter with which he was charged to an axe, and cast it into the sea. It was found, however, at the next ebb of the tide; and, being carried to Edward, showed him at once the desperate condition to which the garrison of Calais was reduced. Without hesitation he sent on the epistle to Philip, and waited the result: but it is now time to turn to the operations of that monarch, who had been delayed by circumstances, but had left no means unemployed to afford relief to the besieged city.

CHAPTER II.

MUSTER OF THE FRENCH TROOPS AT HESDIN.—PHILIP'S EFFORTS AGAINST THE FLEMINGS.—HE MARCHES TO RELIEVE CALAIS.—STRENGTH OF THE ENGLISH POSITION.—NEGOTIATIONS FOR A TRUCE.—PHILIP OFFERS TO FIGHT EDWARD IF HE WILL QUIT HIS ENTRENCHMENTS.—EDWARD CONSENTS.—PHILIP RECEDES FROM HIS PROPOSAL.—HE BURNS HIS TENTS AND RETREATS.—CALAIS SURRENDERS.—EDWARD'S CRUEL CONDITIONS.—PHILIPPA INTERCEDES FOR THE CITIZENS.—OBTAINS THEIR LIBERATION.—THE ENGLISH FORCES ENTER CALAIS.—MEASURES FOR RENDERING IT AN ENGLISH COLONY.

THE muster of the French troops at Hesdin by no means equalled the expectations of the king, who, in consequence of their slow and desultory arrival, was not able to undertake the very object for which they had been summoned, till every measure of precaution that his skilful adversary could devise had been used to frustrate his endeavours. The Flemish army, supported by a detachment from the forces besieging Calais, lay upon the frontiers of Artois;

and the only line of march which Philip could pursue in his advance against Edward exposed his flank to this division of his enemies. At the same time, notwithstanding the separation of a part of the English troops from the main body, means had been taken to increase the besieging force, and enable it both to defend itself and carry on the siege with vigour. As soon as the news of the French muster at Hesdin had reached the camp of Edward, large levies were made in England under Lord James Audley;* and, in the end of May, the Earl of Lancaster, who had now spent several months in his native country, sailed for Calais, leading another powerful reinforcement to the army of the king.

Philip of Valois arrived at the rendezvous at Hesdin in the early part of April; but it was the end of the succeeding month before any important movement could take place. From that period, however, reinforcements from different parts of the country continued to pour into Picardy, and a number of preliminary dispositions were made for the purpose of relieving Calais.

The attention of the King of France was first directed to the means of insuring that the flank of his army should not be turned by one enemy while he advanced to attack another; and, seeing the danger of being surrounded if he suffered the Flemish force to maintain its position, he resolved to begin the campaign by attempting to dislodge it from the situation which it occupied.

He, therefore, made a movement in person upon Arras; and detached his son, John Duke of Normandy, with a considerable body of troops, in order to attack the Flemings, who were then lying in force near Quesnoy, on the Lys. Two severe skirmishes took place immediately upon the approach of the French army, both of which proved in favour of John.† The Flemings retreated from Quesnoy towards Cassel, showing a strong disposition to risk a general engagement at every halt, but never offering any very vigorous opposition to the advance of their enemy, till they reached the latter town. Here, however, they

* Barnes, p. 394.
† Chron. de Flandres, p. 187.

took up their position on the 7th of June; and on the 8th, early in the morning, were attacked by the corps of the Duke of Normandy, who continued his efforts till midday.* Finding, after a battle of nearly five hours, that he had made no impression, the French prince withdrew his troops and retreated, leaving the Flemings and English in possession of the field. The good order, however, in which he drew off his men, and the little loss he had suffered, gave the troops of Flanders no encouragement to follow his retreat; and, judging that the line of march upon Calais was sufficiently open, the duke rejoined his father, and the advance of the united French army upon Calais immediately began.

All these movements had occupied a considerable length of time, and had given Edward a sufficient indication of the purposes of the French king. Every precaution, therefore, was taken to guard all the approaches to the city. The fleet, furnished with the various sorts of artillery then known, was drawn up close in-shore, lying along the line of sand-hills which rise from the margin of the sea, and are called *Dunes:* the passages of the marshes, which extended for a considerable distance round the town, were guarded by the Earl of Lancaster, and a body of chosen troops; and the English camp closed all the avenues to the other sides of the city. The ground in most places was too soft and sandy to admit of the erection of any strong forts for the defence of Edward's position† without great labour; but it would appear that a tower had been constructed at the entrance of the Dunes to aid the fleet in guarding that pass.*

The advance of the French army was extremely slow: but the line of operations was so large, that its mere approach,‡ by cutting off all supplies from the interior,

* Robert of Avesbury, p 154.

† This and other minor particulars concerning the siege of Calais are gathered from the account of an eyewitness, Sir Thomas de la More, preserved by Stow in his General Chronicle.

‡ See a paper in Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 15, dated the 23d of July. It is difficult to reconcile the statement contained in this proclamation, which, though dated at Reading by the custos of England, mentions that the French king had advanced within three

greatly embarrassed the English; and at length, on the 27th of July, the whole of Philip's force, consisting, we are told, of more than 200,000 men, appeared on the heights, called sandgate, on the side of Boulogne. The distance of about a mile, which intervened between the English camp and the position which the enemy immediately took up, was nearly impassable from the marshy state of the ground, and a tower garrisoned with thirty archers defended the narrow pass along the sea-shore. Edward was, therefore, as strongly posted as it is possible to conceive; and Philip, perceiving the difficulties which lay before him, immediately gave orders for encamping on the position he occupied, while a detachment from the men of Tournay attacked the small wooden fort which guarded the sands. The tower was soon taken, notwithstanding the vigorous resistance of the archers; but the English fleet on the left, and the English army in front, were still sufficient to render any efforts on that side desperate, and Philip determined to wait till the following morning, and seek some less hopeless point of attack.

The reconnoitring parties, however, which at break of day went forth to examine the English position, found no way open for the French army to advance against that of Edward, without great concomitant danger and disadvantage; and if Philip ever did propose to risk a battle in order to save Calais, he was shaken in his resolution by the wise dispositions of his adversary. Other means of relieving the city still remained to be tried; and it would appear that from this time, to throw a supply of provisions into the town by stratagem became the French king's principal object.

The cardinals of Tusculum, and of St. John and St. Paul, sent by the unwearied and Christian zeal of Clement VI.

leagues of his father's camp, with the well-known letter of Edward himself, in which that monarch declares that Philip did not come within sight of his host till the Friday before the 1st of August, namely the 27th of July. Now Prince Lionel could not have received the tidings in a less time than two days; and consequently it would seem that Philip of Valois either halted suddenly in his advance, or was five whole days in marching three leagues.

to negotiate a peace between the rival monarchs,* had apparently accompanied the army of Philip on its march; for the very day after that king's arrival they presented themselves at the end of the dyke which crossed the marsh, and demanded to speak with the Earl of Lancaster.† That nobleman, accompanied by the Earl of Northampton and some others, immediately proceeded to meet them; and as they declared that Philip was now willing to offer more advantageous terms of peace,‡ two tents were erected by Edward's order within his lines, wherein envoys§ from the French king treated for some days with the two earls, Sir Walter de Mauny and others, on the part of the King of England.

The first object of the French commissioners was the relief of Calais; and they proposed, as a preliminary, that the troops forming the garrison should be allowed to march out with all that they possessed. Upon this subject, however, the deputies of England positively refused to enter at all, till the general conditions of peace should be arranged; and after great difficulty they induced the opposite negotiators to name the terms which they were empowered to offer. These terms only embraced the restoration of Guyenne as it had been held by Edward's grandfather, together with the county of Ponthieu. As the English king already had in his possession a greater extent of territory in France than was now offered, he rejected the proposal; but the French still endeavoured to keep the treaty in suspense, for the purpose, it is supposed, of attempting by some stratagem to throw supplies into Calais.

* Froissart, Barnes, and others, place the arrival of the cardinals after the proposal of a general battle, and thus confound the subsequent events. It will be seen by the letter of Edward, that the negotiations for a peace preceded the more hostile invitation by several days.

† Robert of Avesbury.

‡ I by no means wish to imply that these prelates were in any degree aware of a design on the part of Philip to take advantage of the negotiations for peace, commenced under their mediation, to throw provisions into the besieged city.

§ The nobles appointed by the French king were the Dukes of Bourbon and of Athens, the Chancellor of France, the Lord of Offemont, and Sir Geoffrey de Charny. See the letter of Edward III. in regard to the siege of Calais.

At length, finding that the English would no longer negotiate for peace, a number of knights and gentlemen were sent to the usual place of conference, bearing to Edward a message from the French king. Philip therein declared, that he had examined the ground in every direction, in order to advance and give the King of England battle, but had found no means of approaching him; and he therefore called upon him to come forth from the marshy ground in which he was encamped, in order that he might fight him power to power in the open field. He still further offered to send four French knights, with four Englishmen of the same rank, to choose a fair plain in the neighbourhood, according to the usages of chivalry.

This message was delivered towards vespers; and it would appear, from the account of Sir Thomas de la More,* that, during the same evening, a body of 17,000 Flemings† and Englishmen, detached from the army which had made such a gallant stand at Cassel, effected their junction with the besieging force. Still Edward's army was far inferior in numbers to that of his adversary, but his heart was confident with the memory of Cressy; and early the next morning, after having consulted with his officers, he replied that he was willing to accede‡ to the plan proposed. He sent, at the same time, a blank safe-conduct for four French

* Stow, p. 224.

† Robert of Namur and several German auxiliaries had joined Edward a little before the appearance of the French.

‡ Froissart, and Barnes, following his account, deny that Edward accepted the defiance of the French king; but the monarch gives it under his own hand, that he not only did accede to the proposal of Philip, but that he issued a safe conduct for any four French knights, who, with four English knights of the same rank, were to choose a fair field. Monsieur de Brequigny, in the Mémoires of the Académie de Belles Lettres, proves circumstantially the truth of Edward's letter, and justifies all parts of the English monarch's conduct with rather prejudiced zeal. It has been said, on the other hand, that Edward, after accepting the defiance of the French king, had a thousand ways of evading the battle. However rash the act might be to quit his strong position, and fight an enemy with four times his numbers in an open plain, it is assuming a great deal too much to insinuate that Edward did not intend to commit it. The matter was never put to the proof, because Philip fled; but Cressy was an evidence sufficient of what Edward dared to do.

knights, in order that, according to Philip's suggestion, the same number might be chosen, on the English part, of equal rank and station.

His envoys, however, found Philip in a different mood: the purpose of giving battle was forgotten; and the only negotiations which the French king seemed willing to entertain concerned the delivery of Calais. On this subject, of course, the English knights had no authority to treat; and they returned to the camp, surprised and dissatisfied at the strange tergiversation of the King of France. How much greater was the astonishment of the English army when, the next morning before daylight, the tents* of the French, crowning the hill above the town, were seen in one general flame; and it was found that Philip and all his host were retreating towards Amiens, with somewhat of unseemly speed. The Earls of Lancaster and Northampton were instantly on horseback, and with a large body of horse hung upon the rear of the enemy, harassing him on his hasty march.

Human ingenuity has exhausted itself in endeavours to find a motive, or assign a cause, for the proceedings of the French king upon the present occasion; but none has been discovered; and the only means of accounting for his conduct is by supposing him affected by a temporary aberration of mind, which many other parts of his history render not improbable.† The fits of rage so frequently recorded

* Robert of Avesbury, ubi supra.

† At one time I was led to believe that some tidings of the Flemish army mustering in his rear might have induced Philip to such a sudden and extraordinary retreat; but on examination I find that by this time the army of Flanders, with the exception of the 17,000 men who were detached to support Edward, was almost entirely disbanded. Neither could the tidings of the disasters of his nephew in Britanny, of which we shall speak immediately, have occasioned the flight of the French king; for those disasters took place in the middle of June, and the intelligence must have reached him before he approached Calais. The difficulties of attacking the English camp could not have caused his retreat; for Edward offered to come forth and give him battle, according to that monarch's own account, and to fill up the trenches and remove all impediments, according to the account of a person present (Thomas de la More). Nor could any doubt of the courage of his own troops affect the French king; for from the same autho-

of him border closely upon madness: in less than fifty years that lamentable disease broke out amongst his descendants;* and a number of actions which he committed, highly detrimental to his own views, without any apparent reason, can only be attributed to the occasional hallucinations of insanity.

The gallant defenders of Calais had beheld the approach of the innumerable legions of France with joy and exultation; but they had marked their long delay with apprehension, and saw them decamp with despair. The first sign that indicated their purpose of surrender was the fall of the French standard, which had been floating on the highest tower of the town;† and, shortly after, news was brought to Edward that the governor in person was upon the battlements, and desired to speak with some of the officers of the besieging army. Sir Walter de Mauny and Ralph Lord Bisset of Sapcoat were immediately sent to confer with him,‡ and found that, as they expected, his object was to obtain the best terms he could. The English knights dared give no encouragement to the hopes of John of Vienne; for, well knowing the determination of the monarch, they were forced to tell him that no probability existed of any conditions being granted: that the inhabitants and garrison of Calais should surrender absolutely, was the demand of the king; reserving entirely to himself the right to pardon whom he pleased, and to put to death those who had most incurred his anger. The governor remonstrated strongly, and prayed the English knights to return to the king and beseech him, for his honour and courtesy, to show mercy to men who had only done their duty. He added also his soldiers' resolution, notwithstanding all that they had endured, to suffer still more severely, and to sell their lives dearly, before the least individual of the whole town should perish by surrender.§

rity we learn that his knights were only too eager to engage, and came every day to joust with the English at the end of the causeway.

* The insanity of Charles VI. declared itself in 1393.

† Thomas de la More, cited by Stow, Gen. Chron. p. 244.

‡ Froissart, chap. cccxx.

§ The history of Calais declares, on the faith of a manuscript

Walter de Mauny willingly undertook the task, though he did so without hope, and, as he expected, he found the king inexorable. The strict laws of war in those days unhappily justified the barbarous practice of putting to death the garrison of a town captured under such circumstances; and the inhabitants of Calais had proved so destructive to the British trade by their piracies, that Edward seemed determined to exercise against them the utmost severity. Sir Walter de Mauny, however, interceded long and boldly, representing to his sovereign that none of his soldiers would willingly defend a town on his behalf from the day forward on which he put to death the people of Calais, as beyond all doubt the French would retaliate at every succeeding siege. All the other nobles who were present seconded warmly the arguments of the knight of Hainault; and Edward was at length induced to yield in some degree. He demanded that six* of the most notable burghers of the captured city, with bare heads and feet, with ropes about their necks, and the keys of the fortress in their hands, should deliver themselves up for execution. On these conditions he agreed to spare the rest: and with this hard message he sent back Sir Walter to the town.

John of Vienne was still upon the battlements, and, on hearing the king's reply, he desired the knight to wait, while he communicated it to the citizens. He then proceeded to the market-hall, and, causing the bell to be rung,

preserved in the abbey of St. Bertinus, that John of Vienne himself went to Edward to solicit terms of capitulation; but the account given by Froissart may not only be received as better authority, but is in itself more probable, and more consistent with the customs of the day. The ferocious sternness of Edward towards the inhabitants of Calais needs some explanation; for, though undoubtedly hasty and fierce, he on no other occasion showed the same unrelenting spirit. All the old English historians affirm that Calais had for years been a nest of pirates, whose depredations were principally carried on against the English and the Flemings; and Villani repeats the same story in the following forcible words:—"Perocche Calese era uno ricetto di corsali, e spilonca di ladroni e pirati di mare."

* The same manuscript cited above says that the number of victims was eight, four being chosen from the burghers of the town, four from the military garrison. Hist. de Calais, vol. i. p. 740.

called the famished and terrified people of Calais to hear their fate. Agony and terror spread through the whole assembly at the news, and tears and silence were for some time the only reply to the cruel demand of the English monarch, while the gallant knight, who had defended the place so long, wept bitterly at the tidings he had been forced to communicate.

At length, after a protracted and mournful pause, the wealthiest and most distinguished of the citizens, named Eustace de St. Pierre, a name immortal,* rose and replied, "Sad pity and shame would it be, sirs, to let all our fellow-citizens die by famine or the sword, when other means can be found to save them; and great shall be his favour and reward in the sight of God, who shall avert such a misfortune from them. I therefore, by right the first, in hope of pardon and grace from our Lord, if I can save the people, will willingly, with naked feet and head, a rope about my neck, and stripped to my shirt, yield myself to the will of the English king."†

"When he had done speaking," says Froissart, "every one ran to honour him; and a number of men and women cast themselves at his feet, weeping most tenderly, and sad it was to hear and see them. Another honest burgher of great wealth, who had two beautiful daughters, rose next, and declared that he would bear his neighbour Eustace company; and they called him John of Aire. After that rose a third, called James de Vissant, who was rich both in goods and heritage, and he said he would follow; as also said his brother, Peter de Vissant, and two others."

* See note, page 35.

† These speeches, and almost the whole of the account here given, I copy from Froissart, because I find that all the other authorities of any import confirm the statements of that writer in every material point, though his narration is much more ample and circumstantial than any other. Nevertheless, I do not pretend to believe myself, and do not wish others to believe, that these speeches contain the precise words used by the individuals to whom they are attributed; but in all probability they are such as persons so situated would have spoken in that day; and I give them as substantially if not verbally correct, and as furnishing an accurate picture of the manners of the time, as well as of the emotions under which the principal characters acted.

The number of these self-devoted men being complete, they threw off their robes, and, putting ropes about their necks, took the keys of the town and the castle, and signified their readiness to set out. John of Vienne* on horseback, for in consequence of a late wound he could not walk, put himself at their head, and they took the way to the gate, while men and women, with their hands clasped, and crying bitterly, ran beside them. Thus accompanied by mourning and tears they issued forth, and came to the place where De Mauny still waited. That knight, promising to do his best to save them, led them direct to the royal tent, within which Edward had assembled all the nobles of England; and when the tidings were brought that the burghers of Calais were arrived, the monarch issued forth with his retinue, followed by Philippa and the Prince his son.

"Behold, sire," said De Mauny, when he saw him, "the representatives of the town of Calais at your command."

The king made no reply but looked on frowning, while John of Vienne surrendered his sword, and the burghers kneeling, said, "Gentle lord and king, behold we six, who were once the greatest citizens and merchants of Calais, bring you the keys of the town and the castle, and give ourselves up to your pleasure; placing ourselves in the state in which you see us, of our own free will, to save the rest of the people of the city, who have already suffered many ills. We pray you, therefore, to have pity and mercy upon us, for the sake of your high nobleness."

"Assuredly," says the chronicler, "there was not in the whole place a lord, a knight, or a brave man, who could abstain from weeping out of pure pity, neither was there any one who could speak for a long time."

Still the king regarded them with an angry countenance,

* Sir Thomas de la More, who was in the besieging army, and who, omitting all the circumstances which induced the six burghers to devote themselves for the common good, describes their procession to the royal tent exactly as Froissart has depicted it, adds, that John of Vienne accompanied the burghers himself to the presence of the English monarch; and as he was undoubtedly present at the whole transaction, I have added this circumstance to the statement of Froissart, which the English knight confirms throughout.

and the first sentence he uttered was an order for their execution. All the lords and knights who were present immediately interposed, especially Sir Walter de Mauny, who boldly exclaimed, "Oh, gentle lord, deign to curb your anger. You have a high name and great renown for sovereign gentleness and nobleness of heart; do not do a thing to tarnish it, nor let men tell of you a baseness. If you have not pity upon these men, every one else will say that it is a great act of cruelty if you are so hard-hearted as to put to death these honest burghers, who of their own free will have cast themselves on your mercy to save their fellows."

"Silence, Sir Walter," cried the king, "I will have it so; let the executioner be called. The men of Calais have put to death so many of my subjects, that I will put them to death also."

At that moment the Queen Philippa,* who was far gone in pregnancy, and who had been weeping bitterly, cast herself on her knees before her husband, exclaiming, "Oh, gentle lord, since I have repassed the seas in great peril to see you, as you well know, I have neither required nor asked anything at your hand; now then, I pray you humbly, and require as a boon, that for the Son of Mary, and the love of me, you take these men to mercy."

The king gazed upon her for a moment in silence, and then replied, "Ah, lady, I would that you had been other where than here; but you beg of me so earnestly I must not refuse you, though I grant your prayer with pain. I give them to you; take them and do your will."

Grateful for having succeeded where all others had failed, the queen rose, and causing them to rise also, she ordered the ropes to be taken from their necks, food and money to be given them, and then set them forth, free and in safety.

Edward, in the mean while, despatched Sir Walter de Mauny with the Earl of Warwick and Lord Stafford, accompanied by a considerable body of men-at-arms, to take

* Villani also gives an account of the intercession of the Queen, book xii. cap. 95; and though his details are in many parts very incorrect, yet his testimony is valuable where it confirms the narration of Froissart.

possession of the captured town. John of Vienne, the governor, and fifteen knights, with a number of the principal burghers, were kept as prisoners, while such of the inhabitants as did not choose to swear fealty to the English monarch were conducted in safety to the French town of Guisnes.* But all the citizens, without exception, were fed by the bounty† of the English monarch; and each carried away with him what effects he could bear upon his person.‡ The ire of Edward soon gave way to better feelings: a number of the noble burghers§ of the town were

* Knighton, col. 2595. T. de la More, cited by Stow, p. 244.

† This fact is universally admitted. Sir Thomas de la More says, that Edward not only fed the whole of the starving population, but that he loaded even those knights and citizens with presents whom he thought fit to detain in captivity. (Stow's General Chronicle, p. 244.) Knighton represents the people of Calais as actually famished; and declares, that on their being suddenly supplied with abundance of food by order of the English king, they devoured such quantities, that many died of repletion during the night. *Knighton*, 2595.

‡ I have here adopted the account given by the continuator of William of Nangis, because it affords a reasonable mean between the extreme discrepancies of other authors. Villani declares that Edward stripped the inhabitants to their shirts, and thus drove them forth. Robert of Avesbury says that the greater part of the citizens were permitted to depart with *all* their goods. The Chronicle of France only admits that they carried with them the clothes they had on. However, it is not reasonable to suppose that Edward exempted the city wholly from the common fate to which towns so situated were generally subject, and yet his after generosity to Eustace de St. Pierre, and many other inhabitants, does not permit us to imagine that, when the first burst of passion was over, he exercised any great severity.

The ordonnances of the kings of France, for assuaging the sorrows of the Calaisians, have been brought forward to show that the people were entirely plundered. But those ordonnances do not prove any such thing. They merely show that the people had suffered severely in defence of the kingdom, and that the kings of France were willing to recompense their services, and supply the losses they had sustained by the confiscation of their property in the town.

§ Monsieur de Brequigny, in his second Mémoire on this subject, "Mémoires de l'Académie de Belles Lettres, vol. xxxvii.," proves beyond a doubt that an immense number of the French inhabitants were permitted to remain, and received houses in the city from the conqueror. At the head of these was Eustace de St. Pierre, to whom Edward not only granted, on the 8th October,

suffered to remain, notwithstanding the monarch's determination to people it with his own subjects; and ere long he saw the generous devotion of Eustace de St. Pierre in the

1347, almost all the possessions he had formerly held in Calais, but also a considerable pension. I am strongly inclined to believe, that every one was permitted to remain who chose to swear fealty to the English king; and there can be no doubt, that indignation at the strange feebleness of Philip's endeavours to relieve them induced many to do homage to his rival.

On this pension granted to St. Pierre, however, and on the fact that Edward bestowed a portion of the forfeited possessions of the townsmen upon Philippa, suspicions have been raised in regard to the whole story of the fall of Calais. The devotion of St. Pierre, and the intercession of Philippa, have been doubted, if not denied. Such doubts appear to me idle, especially with respect to Philippa. In regard to St. Pierre, it seems not at all inconsistent with probability, that the man who could devote himself to death for the safety of his fellow-citizens should feel so indignant at the king who had abandoned them so basely as to remain in the town after it had passed under the sway of a more brilliant and successful monarch, and attach himself more strongly to the gallant conqueror than he had ever done to his feeble and ungenerous rival. Respecting Philippa, it may be shown that the whole of her participation in these events is proved by as strong historical evidence as that which can be adduced for any other fact in the annals of the world.

That she was present when Calais surrendered is proved by the State Papers.

That a certain number of citizens went out barefooted to offer their lives for the rest, is shown by the MS. of St. Bertinus, by Froissart, by Villani, and by an eye-witness, Sir Thomas de la More.

Was it unnatural that a noble-minded woman, seeing such a scene as must have presented itself in the English camp on the arrival of the victims, should be moved by their distress and intercede on their behalf? Would it not have been utterly unnatural if Philippa had failed to do so?

But the statement does not alone rest upon the authority of Froissart. It is confirmed by Villani, who died before the chronicler of Hainault had made his work public,* who was an inhabitant of another land, derived his information from other sources, and whose testimony therefore proves that the intercession of Philippa was a matter of notoriety at the time.

That afterwards, in the confiscation of the property of those inhabitants of Calais who refused to remain and do homage to the English king, she received a considerable donation from her husband, proves nothing on any part.

* The first copy was presented to Philippa after the battle of Poitiers; and Giov. Villani died in 1348 or 1349.

light in which it deserved to shine; and having engaged him to remain in Calais, he loaded him with benefits and honours. On the day following the surrender,* exactly eleven months after the commencement of the siege, Edward, accompanied by the queen and the Black Prince, amidst bursts of martial music, and the shouts of his conquering bands, entered the town in triumph, and took up his abode in the castle. A short time was given to rejoicing, and then the monarch devoted his whole attention to secure the city he had gained. A general invitation was addressed to the inhabitants of England to cross the sea and colonize the conquered territory; and the first of September was appointed as the day for such as desired lands and dwellings in Calais to present themselves at that city. The fortifications were repaired and extended, immense military stores and magazines for provisions were established, and parties were despatched in every direction to clear the neighbouring country of hostile bands; one of these detachments must be more particularly noticed, as it was led by Edward the Black Prince in person.† This was the first separate command he ever enjoyed; but unfortunately little more is known than that he conducted his troops with safety and success, sweeping the country to the very banks of the Sômme; and that he returned without loss, and with considerable booty; while the Earl of Warwick, who was detached towards St. Omer, received a severe check, and lost a considerable number of his men.

* 4th August, 1347.
† Knighton, col. 2595.

CHAPTER III.

THE LAST ACTS OF JOHN DE MONTFORD.—DEFENCE OF BRITANNY BY SIR THOMAS D'AGWORTH.—SIEGE OF LA ROCHE DERIEN BY CHARLES OF BLOIS.—D'AGWORTH MARCHES TO ITS RELIEF.—BATTLE OF LA ROCHE DERIEN AND CAPTURE OF CHARLES OF BLOIS.—SUCCESS OF THE PARTY OF DE MONTFORD.—LA ROCHE DERIEN RETAKEN BY THE LORD OF CRAON.—A TRUCE BETWEEN ENGLAND AND FRANCE CONCLUDED.—ADVANTAGES GAINED BY ENGLAND SINCE THE TRUCE OF MALESTROIT.

Before we proceed to notice the transactions which followed the taking of Calais, it is necessary to pause upon the events which had occurred in Britanny subsequent to the declaration of war in 1345; and it may be as well to recall to the reader's mind that, in the middle of June in that year, the Earl of Northampton set sail for France, with full commission to defy Philip of Valois, on the part of Edward III., to wage war against him in Britanny, and to exercise the sovereign power, as representative of the English king, in such parts of France as he could by any means wrest from the enemy.* There is no reason to suppose that the troops detached to Britanny were sufficient, in point of numbers, to justify any very great efforts in that quarter; but as the proposed expeditions of the Earl of Lancaster to Gascony, and of Edward himself to Normandy, were well calculated to draw the attention of the French monarch to other parts of his dominions, the army of the Earl of Northampton was quite competent to assume the offensive against any force that Charles of Blois could bring into the field. It is not quite clear, whether the same fleet which bore the earl to the coast of Britanny did or did not carry thither John de Montford also; but, at all events, that unhappy prince reached France about the same time, namely, before the end of June;† and, finding

* Rymer, vol. ii. part iv. p. 176.
† 17th June, 1345. Lobinau, vol. i. p. 336.

that the adherents of his opponent had suffered a defeat at the Landes of Cadoret from the troops commanded by Sir Thomas d'Agworth, he immediately attacked and took Dinant, and, marching on, laid siege to Quimper. From this enterprise, however, he was soon obliged to desist;* and, attacked by a violent fever, he retired to Hennebon, where, as before stated, he died on the 23d of September, leaving his son to the guardianship of the King of England, and the territories he held in Britanny to be defended by the Earl of Northampton.

That nobleman continued the war with greater success than had attended the steps of De Montford himself. He took Carhaix, burned the suburbs of Guingamp, and besieged and captured La Roche Derien,† after a protracted and vigorous resistance on the part of the garrison. A battle also took place between the Earl and Charles of Blois, in the neighbourhood of Morlaix, which lasted during the greater part of the day, till at length the troops of Blois were compelled to retreat, and the field remained in possession of the English.‡ As the spring of 1346 approached,

* 1345. Barnes.

† La Roche Derien was taken and retaken many times; and it appears perfectly certain that it was captured in the month of December, 1345, by the Earl of Northampton, (see l'Histoire de Bretagne, D. Morice, vol. i. p. 274). Froissart, however, gives quite a different account of its capture, places it more than a year later (*i. e.* towards the end of the siege of Calais), gives a different name to the captain commanding, and declares the assailants to have been Sir Thomas d'Agworth, Sir John Hartwell, and the famous Tanguy du Chatel. Whether this is to be attributed to the want of knowledge which Froissart frequently displays respecting the affairs of Britanny, or whether, in the interval between 1345 and 1347, it had been recaptured by the French, I have no means of discovering. See Froissart, chap. cccxiii. Much obscurity also exists in regard to who was the king's deputy in Britanny. (Compare Robert of Avesbury, p. 109, with Rymer, vol. ii. part iv. p. 159.)

‡ Barnes, p. 326. Leland's Coll. vol. i. p. 805. Stow, p. 239. I do not feel at all sure that this battle is not the same as that mentioned previously as the battle of the Landes of Cadoret. The accounts in regard to both are very indistinct; and they must have taken place so nearly at the same time, that I feel very doubtful in regard to their being two distinct engagements, although Sir Thomas d'Agworth is said to have commanded on the one occasion, and the Earl of Northampton on the other, and though

and the preparations for the expedition of Edward III. to Normandy appeared nearly complete, the Earl of Northampton was recalled to England, and joined the armament of the king.

In the mean while, Sir Thomas d'Agworth remained in command of the English troops in Britanny; but evils more difficult to meet than hostile armies now assailed him. Either from a succession of inclement seasons, or from the baleful effects of civil war, a general famine was beginning to make itself felt throughout the whole of Britanny at the time he undertook the command; and fears of another deficient harvest rendered provisions more difficult to be procured.* To guard against the effects of this dearth, Sir Thomas d'Agworth laboured incessantly during the whole summer to lay up large stores in the principal fortresses in the power of England; but it must not be supposed that his watchful adversaries suffered him to take these measures of wise precaution without opposition. No supply could be carried from one point to another with safety, unless escorted by a larger force than could be well spared from the garrisons; and while Charles of Blois, concentrating his troops, and refreshing them as they arrived, was preparing to recover the fortresses he had lately lost, Sir Thomas d'Agworth, with his scanty forces, was employed continually in convoying stores to enable those very fortresses to resist.

At length, on the 9th of June, the English commander, with 80 men-at-arms and 100 horse archers, accompanying the march of a body of peasantry conveying provisions, was encountered by the whole force of Charles of Blois, consisting, according to the only accounts we possess, of about 1800 knights and men-at-arms, 2000 archers, and 30,000 irregular foot. Sir Thomas d'Agworth, perceiving that any attempt either to force a passage or to fly, would be equally in vain, resolved to make a stand in a strong position which he had gained, and endeavoured, as far as the circumstances permitted, to add artificial defences to

the one is generally placed prior to the return of De Montford to Britanny, the other after his death.

* Lobinau, vol. i. p 338.

the natural advantages of the situation. But a short time was allowed him for preparation; and at an early hour in the morning the army of Charles of Blois, which by this time completely surrounded him, attacked him on all sides.* On all sides the English commander received and repelled their assault; and, presenting an impenetrable phalanx of men-at-arms in front, while the archers poured flights of arrows upon the assailants as they charged up the hill, he maintained the combat for seven hours; at the end of which time the French retreated, leaving a number of men of note dead upon the field, and two distinguished knights, named Gollois de la Heuse and Payen de Fontenay, prisoners in the hands of the English.

Charles of Blois, however, did not retire to a great distance; but with a determination to conquer at any cost the handful of men who had, by their obstinate and successful resistance, cast such disgrace upon his arms, he merely afforded his troops time to rest, and towards the evening prepared to renew the battle. Dividing his force into three bodies, he gave the command of the first to the Viscount de Rohan, the Lords of Leyacer and Montauban, together with Roland de Tivarlen; the second he assigned to the Lords of Beaumanoir and Rostrenen; and the third he reserved for himself, with the Lords of Rochefort, Quintin, and Coymes. The whole forces were ordered to dismount, and the attack was renewed on foot.

The proximity of the enemy had kept the soldiers of Sir Thomas d'Agworth under arms the whole day; but they, nevertheless, encountered the assailants with unabated vigour and courage, and a long, fierce, desperate combat ensued. The end was the same. The French, repelled at every point, retreated with far greater loss than before; while the handful of Englishmen maintained their ground, without the loss of one man killed or taken, though every individual of their small force was severely wounded before the close of the day.†

* Lobinau, Hist. de Bretagne, tom. i. p. 338

† Argentré has confounded this battle with that of the Landes of Cadoret, which took place the year before, though the circumstances appear to have been quite different. In the one case the English attacked the French in a position which cramped the

The French retired to return no more; and Sir Thomas d'Agworth, with his gallant band, conveyed the stores in safety to their destination. In the mean while, Charles of Blois endeavoured by every exertion to efface the memory of this defeat; but the tide of fortune was setting decidedly against the house of Valois in every part of France; and though the French forces in Britanny still out-numbered, in a very great degree, the united soldiers of England and De Montford, yet it appears that, during the whole of the rest of the year, success was decidedly on the part of Edward III.* and his allies.

In the month of May in the following year, while the English king was still besieging Calais, Charles of Blois determined, by great efforts, to recover the ground he had lost since the renewal of hostilities; and with a force of 1800 men-at-arms,† 2600 archers and cross-bow-men, and an immense number of irregular foot, he marched direct upon La Roche Derien, and invested that fortress on every side. The city, situated at the mouth of the small river Jaudi, and possessing considerable advantages of position, promised to hold out long, notwithstanding the large force brought against it; and Charles of Blois, aware of the difficulties of the undertaking, commenced his operations by guarding his own army against attack. For this purpose he strongly fortified his camp, and caused his pioneers‡ to fill up all the ditches, and cut down the hedges for half a league round in order that no cover might be left to conceal or protect the approach of the English archers. One division of his army was encamped on the opposite side of the

exertions of the latter; but in the battle to which the text alludes, the English were surrounded on every side by the troops of Charles of Blois.

* The Viscount de Thouars, who had led a considerable force to the assistance of Charles of Blois, was surprised and taken in his bed by Rastel de Cahors, a daring but somewhat unprincipled partisan of the house of Montford.

† Robert of Avesbury, p. 159. Sir Thomas d'Agworth here makes a curious distinction, saying, 1200 *nettes gens d'armes, chevalers et esquiers, et 600 d'aultres gens d'armes.*

‡ I take almost all the particulars of this siege from the letter of Sir Thomas d'Agworth, which is preserved in Robert of Avesbury.

river, on what was called the *Place verte*,* while he himself, with his principal chivalry, pitched their tents close to the town, between a mill and an hospital of lepers; and having made these dispositions, he proceeded vigorously in the siege of the fortress.

No sooner did Sir Thomas d'Agworth, who by this time had received the king's commission, appointing him lieutenant-general in Britanny,† hear of the danger of La Roche Derien, than, setting out with what forces he could collect, he marched, without delay, to relieve the garrison at any risk. He states his whole force to have been 300 men-at-arms, and 400 archers, to which probably was joined a proportionate number of armed peasantry; and with these he took his way through the innumerable forests which, in those days, covered the whole face of Britanny, and arrived at the Abbey of Bégar, not far from the besieged city.

Charles of Blois had been warned that he was approaching;‡ but does not appear to have received any precise information in regard to his immediate proximity: and apparently calculated on being attacked upon the side of the *Place verte*.§ Careful patrols, however, were stationed in different positions; and the famous Lords of Derval and Beaumanoir commanded the guard, in the quarters of Charles of Blois, on the night of the 19th of June 1347.||

* Lobinau, Hist. de Bretagne.

† Rymer, vol. iii. part i. p. 2. Barnes says, that Sir Thomas d'Agworth was detached from the siege of Calais to take the command in Bretagne. But there does not appear any reason to suppose that he ever was at Calais, if we except the fact that the king was besieging that city when d'Agworth was appointed his lieutenant in Britanny. The patent, however, was issued by the custos of the kingdom, not by the monarch himself, and is dated from Reading, which makes it almost certain that the gallant officer of whom I speak was not one of Edward's army at all, and had never quitted Britanny.

‡ Robert of Avesbury, ubi suprà.

§ Lobinau, vol. i. p. 310.

|| I reject the account of Froissart, in regard to this battle, altogether, because in almost every part it is in direct opposition to the testimony of eye-witnesses. In no point does it differ more from the account of D'Agworth himself, than in regard to the relative numbers; for, though he states the army of Charles of

On the evening of that day, the English commander had arrived at Bégar; and, notwithstanding the strictness of the siege, had undoubtedly found means both of communicating with the garrison of La Roche Derien, and of learning the details of his enemy's position. His resolution to attack the French army in its entrenchments was not at all shaken by the precautions which had been taken against him, nor by a more accurate knowledge of the immense superiority in point of numbers which Charles of Blois possessed; and, setting out about midnight, he crossed the water of the Jaudi, and directed his march straight towards the quarters of the French commander. The night was uncommonly dark, and the English force had reached the hospital before any of the adverse host were aware of its approach. The alarm was then given; the guards, headed by Beaumanoir and Derval, threw themselves across the path of the assailants, and the whole camp was soon in arms. The battle now became general, and the strife lasted for several hours by torchlight, while D'Agworth made four successive attempts to cut his way through the enemy's lines, in the course of which he is reported to have been twice taken and twice delivered. At length, as day began to dawn, the soldiers of the garrison, who had anxiously been listening to the cries of the battle, threw open their gates, and, issuing forth, armed with battle-axes, as soon as they could distinguish friend from foe, fell upon the rear of the besiegers; while D'Agworth, with his characteristic perseverance, still

Blois to have consisted of nearly the same number as that assigned to it by the English general's despatch, he more than trebles the amount of the English men-at-arms, and multiplies the rest by twenty. The Metrical Chronicle of Guillaume de St. André, secretary to the son of De Montford, a contemporary, gives as nearly as possible the same account of the relative numbers as that furnished by D'Agworth; or, six of the party of Blois to one of the English and Bretons on the side of Montford. His words are:—

"Ce fut la nuit à la chandelle
La bataille y fut moult belle;
Car contre un, à mon avis,
Des gens de Jean, y avoit six,
Des gens Charles, armez tres bien,
Tous fin et qu'il n'en fallut rien."

assailed them unremittingly in front. More than 500 of the French men-at-arms had already fallen; a still greater number were wounded or prisoners; and at this moment Charles of Blois himself was captured.* The news spread like lightning through his forces; and, instead of attempting to rescue him by bold and united efforts, his troops were seized with panic, and fled in every direction from the field.† Between 600 and 700 bannerets, knights, and men-at-arms, fell in the battle, together with an immense number of foot soldiers. Seven lords and 200 knights were taken; while the capture of Charles of Blois himself rendered this battle one of the most important events of the whole war.

That prince, wounded in eighteen places, was carried into the fortress he had so lately been besieging; and, after his wounds had been healed, was sent a prisoner to England, where he was confined in the Tower of London, with the King of Scotland. That his imprisonment was strict, is very probable; and that he bore it with fortitude and meekness, is equally likely: but that he was treated with unusual rigour, performed miracles, or became a saint, are points which, being asserted on the same authority, are worthy of the same degree of credit.‡

* To whom Charles of Blois surrendered is a matter of great doubt. Dom Morice (tom. i. p. 276) supposes that he has established clearly the fact of Charles of Blois having yielded his sword to Robert du Chatel, one of the garrison of La Roche Derien; but many objections present themselves to this supposition. Charles of Blois became the prisoner of the King of England, and not of the house of Montford. It is Edward who treats concerning his ransom, it is Edward who holds him in prison, it is Edward who speaks of him as his prisoner, receives hostages for his return, and at his will grants or refuses his manumission, which, according to the laws of war in that day, could not have happened, had he yielded himself to any other than an English subject. It is to be remarked, also, that the principal evidence upon this point consists in the examinations of witnesses for the canonization of Charles of Blois, a tissue of absurdities rarely equalled.

† Lobinau, vol. i. p. 340.

‡ In regard to this prince, a number of tales have been put forth, by those who should have known better, on the authority of the witnesses examined upon an inquiry into how far he merited canonization; amongst which tales, those that have been most made use of are anecdotes in regard to cruelties shown him in

The relief of La Roche Derien was followed by a vast number of successes. Carhaix, which had again fallen into the hands of the French, was retaken, as was also Vannes; and, during the stay of Sir Thomas d'Agworth in Britanny, the predominance of the English influence and of the house of Montford was decided. The important services of that officer were not suffered to remain unrewarded; and, during the year which saw the fall of La Roche Derien, he was raised to the peerage, and received many other marks of his sovereign's gratitude.*

Joan of Penthievre or of Blois, the wife of the captured prince, now remembered, in her time of need, the example set her by the Countess de Montford when placed in the same situation, and she boldly undertook to carry on the war in the absence of her husband. Her first step was to apply to Philip, her relative and sovereign, for aid under the imminent danger which threatened her; and the King of France, whose efforts to save Calais proved ineffectual about that period, despatched the Lord of Craon and Anthony Doria, with a large force, to give her prompt assistance. Lord d'Agworth was absent in England† when this formidable reinforcement joined the adverse army; and the partisans of the house of Blois rose throughout the

prison by D'Agworth and others. Any one who takes the trouble to examine the evidence on that very ridiculous proceeding, his attempted canonization, will find quite sufficient cause to reject with contempt the testimony of the witnesses, who swear to a multitude of mighty miracles performed by that poor prince. Nor are those things only to be rejected which refer to the miracles; but also, as a part of the whole fabrication, the account of ill treatment suffered by him in prison, can by no means be received; for those who swore to a thousand falsehoods, to make him a saint, would certainly not scruple to swear a thousand more to prove him a martyr. The whole business is unworthy of being received for one moment in a matter of history; and that the unfortunate prince was not treated with any very great severity may be inferred from the fact, that Joan of Blois his wife, had free access to him in the midst of an adverse city, at a time even when great apprehensions were entertained of his being carried off.

* Barnes, p. 402. Barnes also attributes the de Lisle peerage to the same year, 1347, and to the same services. There is, indeed, no doubt that the famous John de Lisle, one of the founders of the order of the Garter, was present at the battle of La Roche Derien.

† Barnes, p. 402.

whole province, and followed the French leaders, to lay siege once more to the often captured castle of La Roche Derien.

During the first three days the English garrison thought of nothing but resistance; but, finding that they could not long hold out against the overpowering force now brought against them, they proposed to capitulate on the third day, on condition of their lives and property being secured. This, however, was refused; and the Lord Craon at length hung a purse of fifty gold crowns upon a lance, offering it as a reward to the first man who should force his way into the place.* The Genoese mercenaries redoubled their efforts; a part, to the extent of fifty feet, of the wall was thrown down, and the besieging army rushed in. The inhabitants of the town were slaughtered with the usual indiscriminate fury displayed in a city taken by storm. Men, women, and children perished alike; and the only persons in the whole town that escaped were the soldiers of the garrison, who made good their retreat to the citadel. After having defended themselves there for some time, they at length surrendered, upon the French commander promising that they should not only be spared by his own troops, but that he would cause them to be conducted in safety for ten leagues on their journey. Stripped of their armour and their arms, they were put under the escort of two Breton knights and a few soldiers, and sent on their way. But at Quintin, the lord of which place had been killed before La Roche Derien, the people of the town assembled in great numbers, and slaughtered the unhappy prisoners to a man;† notwithstanding the efforts of the escort to prevent an event which threw no small disgrace upon the character of those who did not take sufficient means to insure the fulfilment of so sacred an engagement.

Such was the state of affairs in Britanny when a suspension of hostilities, including that province, was agreed upon between the Kings of France and England. Edward

* Lobinau, vol. i. p. 340.

† The commander is said to have escaped, one of the Breton knights lending him his horse for that purpose. Nevertheless I cannot help feeling that the conduct of the Lord of Craon was inexcusable, in suffering a body of men, to whom he had promised security, to be murdered for want of a sufficient escort.

had, by this time, fulfilled all his designs in regard to Calais; and, after having allotted the vacant dwellings to a number of his subjects, had provided fully for its security in time to come. Sir John Cheverston* was appointed governor of the town; and a numerous garrison was selected for the task of guarding a conquest that was likely to be often and severely disputed.† All probability of immediate attack, however, was removed by the truce just mentioned, which was brought about by the intercessions of the Cardinals of Clermont and Naples,‡ who, labouring with noble zeal in the cause of peace, induced the two monarchs to consent to a suspension of hostilities for the space of ten months, which was accordingly proclaimed on the 28th of September, 1347. This truce included all the allies of both monarchs, and confirmed, in many points, the broken treaty of Malestroit;§ but, as some of the articles throw light upon many curious particulars relating to the mode of warfare in that day, it may not be unnecessary to notice the principal heads.

The treaty, after naming the chief allies of the contending parties, and their various dependants in the provinces which had been the scene of war, goes on to stipulate that the cardinals shall cause the reading of the papal anathema against the Flemings to cease, and use all their endeavours

* He was superseded in October of the same year by Sir John Montgomery. See Rymer, tom. v. p. 592. Edition 1727.

† Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 20.

‡ Otherwise the Cardinals of Tusculum and of St. John and St. Paul. We find a story recorded in regard to this treaty which, as it has been very generally adopted, deserves notice. The truce is said to have been brought about by Guy of Montford, Cardinal of Boulogne; but in none of the public documents do I find the name of such a person once mentioned, while the two cardinals whose titles are given above are named, not only in the powers to treat, but in the body of the convention also.

§ It did so generally; but, with respect to the observation of the truce in Britanny, I can find no clause which, according to the assertion of Lobinau, Froissart, &c., permitted the prosecution of the war in any province whatever, *which was the case in the treaty of Malestroit*. So far opposed to such a permission is the whole spirit of the treaty, that the contracting parties agree to use means for the purpose of inducing all the lords of Bretagne to swear they will strictly observe the terms of truce.—See *Rymer*, tom. iii. part i. p. 20.

with the pontiff to raise the interdict. It then states that the principal leaders in Britanny shall be sworn to observe the truce, and provides that neither of the kings shall enter the territories of the other, nor the count of Flanders set foot within his country; that neither of the kings, openly or secretly, shall endeavour to bribe or seduce any of the allies or dependants of his adversary; and that no such ally or dependant can change sides during the suspension of hostilities. It is also strictly covenanted, that no attempt is to be made by any of the parties to induce other persons to wage war, or directly or indirectly to injure his adversary; and free egress and regress is granted, in both countries, to all traders and merchants, and other peaceful persons, always excepting exiles by law. That all castles, towns, and territories, in the possession of either party, shall remain in their respective hands, is next agreed upon; and the immediate cessation of all sieges and hostilities is covenanted, while a promise is made to restore everything taken after the date of the treaty.

It is next stipulated that all persons whose prisoners have broken parole, or evaded the payment of their ransom, shall have safe conduct to come and go, in order to seek, send for, or summon such prisoners; and that justice shall be done them by officers appointed for the purpose on both sides. That all towns or territories which have agreed to pay certain sums of money for what is called *patis* or exemption from war, and who have not fulfilled their engagements, shall be obliged to do so, is the subject of another clause. The other articles contain a list of the judges appointed to see right done on these points; and the nomination of a court of resort, in case those judges should refuse or neglect to exercise their functions.

This truce left Edward III. free to return to England without risking any of the advantages he had gained; but shortly after the capture of Calais, the queen was delivered of a daughter within the walls; and it was not till Philippa was capable of accompanying him that Edward set out with his court and army for his native country. As usual, his passage was rendered dangerous by a tremendous storm, in which several of the smaller vessels were lost; and a somewhat curious prayer, or rather expostulation, ad-

dressed to the Virgin, is attributed to the king, on the subject of the foul weather which always attended his return from France.*

The monarch, with the Black Prince, his son, arrived in England on the 12th of October, exactly fifteen months after their landing in Normandy;† and certainly never was there a more brilliant or more successful expedition recorded on the page of history. Edward had ravaged his adversary's territories, had advanced to the very gates of his capital, had defeated him, in a general battle, with immensely inferior numbers, and had captured one of the strongest and most important towns in his dominions. Nor had the arms of the English generals in other parts of the same country been less successful than those of the king himself. The greater part of Guyenne, Sainctonge, Perigord, and Poitou, had been conquered by a very small force. The house of Montford had been upheld in Britanny; and the extraordinary exploits of the English soldiers had left all their former deeds in shadow. A rapid, devastating, and unexpected incursion into England itself had been met and repelled in the absence of the monarch; the invaders had been terribly defeated, and their sovereign had been taken. That such events should ever take place is greatly to be deplored; but the period to which they belong is only one of the steps in the progress of society. It is an affectation in what may be called the vulgar school of modern philosophy to treat the wars of past times lightly and contemptuously. We must remember, however, that those wars, at the time of their occurrence, were amongst the principal movers in the advance of society: that we are in fact only just escaping, and not yet fully escaped, from the military period of the world's annals; and that in all

* Walsingham, Hist. p. 158. If the expostulation, which is given upon the somewhat doubtful authority of Walsingham, be at all worth preserving, it is worth preserving in the words of Joshua Barnes, whose translation renders it more amusing than it is even in the original:—"St. Mary, my blessed lady, what should be the meaning of this; that always in my passage for France the wind and seas befriend me, but in my return for England I meet nothing but adverse storms and destructive tempests?"

† Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 23.

which has preceded our own days, the wars of the times, their progress and their results, are—both as occupying the grand field of exertion for human energy and human intellect, and as affecting their exertions in every other field—one of the most legitimate objects, though not the only object of history.

In the wars on which we have just dwelt far more substantial and immediate benefits had been obtained than wars generally produce. Though* the expenses incurred by the various armaments had been considerable, and the nation had been called upon to contribute largely to give those armaments effect, the liberality shown by the parliament had produced what liberality wisely exerted almost always will produce, a tenfold return. Immense wealth flowed into England from the great successes of Edward's arms; and where we found in the beginning of his reign

* The amount of pay alone, during the expedition of Edward III. from the 4th June 1346 till the 12th October 1347, namely, 496 days, is stated in the papers of Walter Wentworth, or Wentweight, at the sum of 127,201*l.* 2*s.* 9½*d.*, which, when the real value of a pound sterling at that time is considered, will appear an enormous sum.

The account of the daily expense of the army before Calais has been so frequently given, that it seems unnecessary to repeat it here as a whole. Some of the items however may not be uninteresting:—

	£	s.	d.	
The Prince - - - -	1	0	0	per diem.
The Bishop of Durham - -	0	6	8	
13 Earls, each - -	0	6	8	
44 Barons and Bannerets, each	0	4	0	
1046 Knights - - - -	0	2	0	
4022 Squires, Constables, &c.	0	1	0	
5104 Horse Archers, &c. -	0	0	6	
15,480 Archers - - -	0	0	3	

The engineers and mechanics received various sums, according to the nature of their arts, and their individual grade, from twelve to three solidi per diem each. The Welsh foot received each two-pence, and it appears that the Vinctners or commanders of twenty men in general claimed double the pay of an individual of the corps they commanded. This statement would show a very different total from the account of Walter Wentworth; but we must remember that the army before Calais was greatly increased in number. There is evidently, however, a discrepancy, making every allowance.

the most striking signs of want and exhaustion;—in regard to the circulating medium, at least, if not in absolute produce,—we find, at the close of 1347, the most unequivocal proofs of restored abundance and increasing plenty.*

CHAPTER IV.

AMUSEMENTS OF THE ENGLISH COURT DURING PEACE.—THE IMPERIAL CROWN OFFERED TO EDWARD BY SOME OF THE ELECTORS.—THE PRINCESS JOAN SETS SAIL IN ORDER TO BE MARRIED TO PETER PRINCE OF CASTILE.—HER DEATH AT BORDEAUX.—SOME ACCOUNT OF THE PLAGUE OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

FOR many years England had scarcely ever laid aside the habiliments of war; but now she was destined, for a short time, to wear the robes of peace; and it may not be uninteresting to pause for a moment, and trace the same form and features under a different garb.

Festivities and rejoicings of all sorts followed the arrival of the King of England in his dominions; and Edward Prince of Wales, rising rapidly to manhood, now took the lead in all the military pageants and energetic diversions of the day. Tournament followed tournament, joust succeeded joust, and in almost all of these sports the Black Prince was one of the combatants, generally appearing at the head of the challengers. Sometimes he ran his course in the armour of another knight, sometimes he showed himself in his own; but he had by this time taken his spring forward from boyhood towards maturity, and with all the eager zeal of unsated youth was constantly trying the new powers which he had now acquired.

The spirit of chivalry, about this period, arrived at its height in England; for if it had been revived by the king, it was at once polished and brightened by the Black Prince. Edward III., with all the courage, the enthusiasm, the en-

* Walsingham, p. 121.

terprise, and the magnificence, which the task required, had raised the order of knighthood from the depressed state into which it had sunk under his father, but the very shrewd and politic character of his mind, which had joined with his more splendid qualities to make him labour to revive the chivalrous ardour of his people, had altered in a degree the spirit of the institution. He was at once a great and wise prince, a gallant and accomplished gentleman, and a prudent and successful general; but it was reserved for his son to restore to chivalry all its enthusiastic brightness. In the father, prudence had always predominated over enthusiasm, had guided extraordinary talents, and used, rather than submitted to, the spirit of the age. But with the Black Prince it was the enthusiasm which, guided and supported by immense military genius, led to immortal renown. The king too, though brave as a lion, had much of the lion's fierceness, while his son combined with the same dazzling courage that beautiful courtesy of heart, which was an essential point in the character of true chivalry.

"With such a spirit, supported by a corporeal frame of uncommon power and beauty, bounding forth into the arena of life, with a heart all sympathies, and a mind all enterprise,—with such a spirit, I say, continually leading the young nobility of the day, we cannot be surprised to find the court of Edward becoming each hour more and more the centre of all that was splendid in Europe. The eyes of the whole world were fixed upon the English shores; and even during peace, the proceedings of Edward and his nobles were little less matter for rumour and admiration than his brilliant successes in the field.

The king himself fully appreciated the character of his son, and nothing was wanting on the part of the monarch to encourage and excite the prince in the course, which his genius and his inclinations led him to pursue. Indeed there can be little doubt that the many tournaments and passes of arms which were held about this time in England, originated as much in the king's desire of giving his son every enjoyment and opportunity, as in the view of maintaining the warlike spirit of the nation.

Besides these military games, however, other diversions enlivened the time of truce, and kept up those active habits,

so useful in the days of war. The chase, always the passion of a chivalrous people, was not neglected by the English court; and we find in the contemporary poem of Gaces de la Bigne the highest honours attributed to Edward for his skill in an amusement which was then regarded as science.* All that could tend to excite and gratify the mind in such exercises was encouraged by every art; and it is probable that the degree of ardour and delight occasioned in those days by the rapid motion and the great exertion, the forest scenery, the cry of the hounds, and the melody of the horns, was far superior to that afforded even by the animated scene of a hunting field in the present times.

Falconry also was a passion with the court of Edward III., and when the prince or the king went out to fly their hawks, long preparations and public announcements showed the importance attached to the royal sport in the opinion of its followers.† The bridges were repaired beforehand, paths were opened by the rivers for the horsemen, and all persons were forbidden, under severe penalties, to disturb the game in the neighbourhood of the selected spot for many days before.

Such were the amusements of the English court during the latter months of the year 1347, and at the beginning of the following year; and two events contributed to give greater splendour and importance to all the festivities of the time. The first of these was the arrival of ambassadors from a great body of the electors of the German empire,‡ charged to offer the Imperial crown to the English monarch. Louis of Bavaria,§ after a long and turbulent reign,

* Great art was displayed in those times in sounding the horn, and much care and skill were required to match the voices of the dogs, so as to render the cry of the whole pack melodious.

† Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 24.

‡ The electors who thus voted for Edward were the Archbishop of Metz, Radolphus and Rupert, Counts Palatine of the Rhine and Dukes of Bavaria, Louis, Marquis of Brandenburgh, and the Dukes of Upper and Lower Saxony.

§ Moreri and others declare, that Louis of Bavaria died by a stroke of apoplexy while hunting. Villani, however, says, that his death was occasioned by a fall from his horse. It unfortunately happens that German historians cannot greatly be depended on in regard to German history, being not always very correct,

had died on the 11th of October 1347, and the electors of his party, who had dissented from the nomination of Charles of Luxemburgh, the French and papal candidate, now determined, if possible, to seat another prince on the throne.*

Their first choice fell upon the English monarch, whose power was sufficiently great to give protection to his supporters, and to afford a fair prospect of once more consolidating the empire: But many objections existed in the breast of Edward to counteract all temptations. Charles of Luxemburgh had been crowned by the Archbishop of Cologne at Bonn, under the authority of a papal bull. A number of the electors, therefore, being decidedly adverse, and the pope committed to support by every means the rival candidate, the acceptance of the Imperial crown on the part of the King of England must have been followed by a new war in Germany, wherein the formidable artillery of excommunication, anathema, and interdict were sure to be employed against him. Had society been at this period prepared for a great religious change, it is probable that Edward would have set the pontifical thunders at defiance; but society was not prepared, and that conviction was fully impressed upon the mind of the English monarch. Having also to defend Britanny, Gascony, and Calais, Flanders and the Scottish border, to have accepted a new crown would only have served to give his enemies fresh means of assailing him; and, after some consideration, he wisely refused the tempting but dangerous offer. The electors, adverse to the papal candidate, then proceeded to choose another person to whom their proposal might prove more acceptable; but in the second selection that they made, they did not show

notwithstanding the laborious dulness and barbarous style in which so many of them invest their thoughts, and which give an air of authority and erudition that the works themselves do not always justify. It is extraordinary, that while every other branch of literature has been making such immense progress in Germany, that country has not produced one great historian of Germany itself.

* Villani, p. 910.—(N. B. I have made my references to two editions of Villani; the ordinary large one, which I consulted while in England, and the small 8vo, which I found in Italy. These figures refer to the larger.)

the same unanimity which had distinguished their choice of Edward; and the empire, though not without some further intrigues, remained in the hands of Charles of Luxemburgh.

In the mean time, negotiations, which had been long pending, in regard to the marriage of the Princess Joan, the second daughter of the English monarch, with Peter, the heir of the Castilian throne, were brought to a conclusion, and the bride, who had not yet accomplished her fourteenth year, was sent over to Bordeaux, with a considerable train of attendants, in order to be united to her promised husband. Festivities of various kinds preceded her departure; but the crown which had been held out to her, and which in all probability would have been a thorny one indeed, was never destined to be placed upon her brow. Scarcely had she reached the shores of Aquitaine, when she was suddenly taken ill, and died after the suffering of a few hours.

The disease which terminated her existence would at any period deserve a place in history, as one of the most terrible scourges which the world ever felt, but at no time more than at present, when a similar pestilence has recently visited the north, though in a very mitigated form. In the writings of the time a multitude of signs and portents are recorded as warnings of its approach, from which it is only necessary in this place to select those which the state of science in the present day permits us rationally to connect with the pestilence which followed. These were almost all either of a tellural or atmospherical nature; but it appears undoubted that a number of extraordinary phenomena preceded and accompanied the appearance of the disease.

Heavy rains and unusual floods, storms of lightning of unheard-of violence, and hail showers of unparalleled duration and severity, announced during the two or three previous years some derangement of the electrical equipoise; while earthquakes of excessive violence rent Italy and Germany, and were felt in places where for immemorial years no such events had taken place.*

* Although it is difficult for a sane and unprejudiced person to examine accurately the progress and history of any of the pesti-

The pestilence which followed originated in the East,* and by vulgar report, was said to have first appeared in China. It thence soon made its way to Hindostan; and the rumours of the tremendous ravages which it was committing in Asia reached Europe long before itself, together with a thousand of the marvels with which man's credulity strives so often to justify his terror by magnifying the cause.† Showers of serpents were said to have fallen in the East, strange and unknown insects were reported to be borne about in the atmosphere, and clouds of sulphurous vapour to have issued from the earth and enveloped whole provinces and countries; but the most important and

lences which have at different times afflicted the world, without coming to the conclusion that they were propagated by infection, yet it is not at all improbable that a peculiar state of the atmosphere may be necessary to the original production of highly infectious diseases, and to their transmission after they have been produced; for, of whatever particles the poison may consist, those particles must be modified by the medium through which they are conveyed. In all probability, many more of the phenomena of our corporeal existence are brought about by the various modifications of electricity than we have yet discovered. However that may be, we find from the best historical records that violent convulsions, both of the earth and the air, each probably depending on electrical causes, have always preceded or accompanied any very severe pestilence. I shall only cite two examples. In the sixth century, horrible in history for the fifty years' plague which visited Europe about the reign of Justinian, more tremendous storms and destructive earthquakes are recorded than in any other period in history. Libanus was rent by the shocks, and the gigantic Lithoprosopon was cast into the sea. The learned and splendid Berytus, with its schools and colleges, was left a ruin on the Phœnician coast; and Antioch, with her innumerable fanes, saw more than two hundred thousand of her citizens and strangers buried amongst the falling marbles of temples and palaces. Year following year the whole Roman empire was shaken with earthquakes; and while the ground was rocking round them, ten thousand people have been known to die in one day within the gates of Constantinople.

At a later period, in the years from 795 to 801, extraordinary earthquakes were felt both in Italy and in Germany. The old church of St. Peter at Rome was nearly cast down, several cities were completely ruined, and mountains were overthrown, while in the first year of the ninth century a pest broke out which threatened to depopulate the whole of Italy and France.

* Knighton, col. 2598. † Villani, lib. xii. cap. 84.

the most truly terrific fact was, the rapid and desolating approach of the plague itself. From India it spread to Arabia, Syria, and Armenia, depopulating whole tracts, and leaving deserts in the room of peopled cities. Those who remained died, and those who fled carried it to their place of refuge. No measures of prevention were taken, no means of cure were known; and in no country where it appeared did it take less than two thirds, while in some places it carried off nine-tenths of the population. So diffusible and so potent was the infectious virus, that those who remained to attend the sick died with those to whom they ministered; and so dreadful were the outward appearances of the disease, so certainly fatal its effects, that in most instances parents, and friends, and attendants, fled from the infected. The social duties, the sweet charities, the love, the piety, the vigour, were swallowed up in the selfishness of terror; the sick were abandoned, and the dying died alone.

From Asia it spread to Africa and to Europe, affecting the sea-shores at first, and thence extending, according to the facilities of human intercourse, to towns in the interior. The course of rivers and streams, as affording the most rapid means of transport, were marked by the pestilence creeping quickly up from the mouth as far as each was navigable. Italy followed Greece in the line of the plague, and the maritime cities suffered the most fearfully. In Venice more than 100,000 persons perished in a few months, and thence spreading over the whole peninsula, not a town and scarcely a hamlet escaped without the visitation of that fearful scourge. At Florence 60,000 people were carried off, one of whom was the historian John Villani. At Lucca, at Genoa, in Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica, it raged with equal violence; and entering France by Provence, visited Avignon with unabated fury. Of the English college at that place, not an individual was left, and throughout the extent of that small city 1200 persons died in one day. Paris lost upwards of 50,000 of her inhabitants: Lubeck counted 90,000 dead; and through Germany more than 1,200,000 persons were swept away within a year after its first appearance.

The symptoms and effects of the disease, from the ig-

norance of people and the panic that spread wherever it appeared, cannot be traced exactly; and every peculiarity which has characterized any pestilence from the beginning of the world has been attributed to the one of which I write. Its progress and its habits, however, being learned without the near contact which rendered examination of the symptoms dangerous, are more fully detailed, and to give an account of these is to describe the march of the Asiatic cholera. Those who were attacked generally died in a few hours; but if they struggled through two or three days, hopes might be entertained of their recovery, though even then they sometimes fell into an apoplectic sleep from which they never awoke. Proceeding from town to town, and from village to village, the pestilence seldom remained more than a few months in each, swept away the appointed number, and then went on to ravage some other spot. At the same time other diseases, which had been prevalent previous to its appearance, ceased for the period of its stay. Thus sweeping away whole races, it advanced from Asia through Africa and Europe, and at length reached the shores of Great Britain, which was one of the last places that it visited.

In the beginning of August, 1348, it appeared upon the sea-coast of those counties more directly in communication with the south-western shores of France, on which it was raging with great virulence; and then proceeding through Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire, broke out in London, about four months after its first arrival in Great Britain. The mortality now exceeded all that had ever been previously known in this country. Death was in every street and in every house, the city was tenanted by the dead and the dying, the ceremonies accompanying interment were abandoned, the church-yards became too narrow for the corpses, and the living were hardly sufficient to bury the dead. Fear fell upon all men; and the heavy scourge had at least the effect of producing some reformation in the morals of the times. The pious and charitable bought pieces of ground, and caused them to be consecrated for the burial of the dead; and therein deep pits were dug, in which the corpses were piled row above row, with a thin stratum of earth between them.

The principal spot of ground thus applied was a field called Spital's Croft, containing about thirteen acres, which was bought by the gallant Sir Walter de Mauny,* and consecrated for the interment of those who died of the pestilence. Though we cannot by any means ascertain the exact number of persons who were swept away in the English capital, the amount of those buried in the above cemetery alone affords a dreadful picture of the prevalence and force of the disease. In the year of its consecration 50,000 people were interred in that field; and at the Charter House, which was afterwards built upon the spot, a stone cross might be seen for many years, commemorating the number of dead who rested below. The pestilence now spread over the whole face of the country: Scotland, Ireland, and Wales were all infected. The parliament which had been summoned for 1349† was prorogued, and could never be held; and such was the terror that took possession of all hearts, that Edward was obliged to lay an embargo on the ports,‡ lest the island should, between death and flight, be left utterly destitute of inhabitants.§

In Yarmouth more than 7000 persons died, and in Norwich upwards of 50,000 were swept away: in short, the accounts which have been transmitted to the present day, of the ravages committed by that fearful pestilence, are so extraordinary, when compared with what we have reason to believe were the numbers of the population, that, were there not a body of evidence upon the subject which removes all suspicion, even of exaggeration, we should feel inclined to doubt the facts.

* Stow's Survey, pp. 477, 478.

† Rymer, tom. iii. part i. pp. 148, 149.

‡ Idem, 151.

§ The words in which this prohibition is couched give sufficient evidence of the awful state to which the country was then reduced:—"Quia non modica pars populi regni nostri Angliæ, in præsenti pestilentiâ est defuncta, et thesaurus ejusdem regni plurimùm exhaustus, et (ut intelleximus) quamplures ejusdem regni nostri, cum pecunia, quam in eodem Regno nostro habere poterunt, ad partes exteras indies se transferunt et transferre proponunt.

"Nos, advertentes quòd si hujusmodi transitus toleretur, idem regnum tam de hominibus quàm de thesauro infra breve destitueretur," &c.

Everything, however, evinces that those facts were truly stated, and nothing more clearly proves that they were so, than the extraordinary rise which took place in the price of daily labour,* which was suddenly increased to five and six times the amount at which it stood before the appearance of the pestilence. The lower classes, indeed, suffered so greatly, that labourers were with difficulty procured. The fields were deserted, the cattle wandered about at random and died for want of care, and at length the plague beginning to affect the beasts as well as the human race, immense numbers were swept away throughout the whole land. So general was the destruction, so infinite the probabilities of death to every individual, that men became utterly careless of all that at other times is of importance: lands and goods were sold for anything they would bring, and avarice seemed for once to have learned the lesson that wealth goes not beyond the grave.† Though the lower classes were

* Rymer. tom. iii. part j. p. 61. In the time of harvest, after the plague had abated, a reaper was commonly known to demand eight-pence, and a mower twelve-pence per diem, besides his food; which, when we consider the ponderal and relative value of the penny in that day, becomes perfectly enormous. To such a height, indeed, was this abuse carried, that Edward, to guard against the immeasurable evils likely to ensue, was obliged to publish a very necessary, though arbitrary proclamation; in the preamble of which he states, that the greater part of the populace having been carried off by the pestilence, it is reported that many persons, seeing the necessity of the masters and the scarcity of labourers, refuse to work except at excessive prices, and choose rather to beg in idleness than receive moderate wages. He then proceeds to fix the rates of payment at those of the twentieth year of his reign in the same places, or at the average of five or six years before; forbidding, under pain of imprisonment, more to be demanded, and, under considerable penalties, more to be given while punishments are assigned to all who refuse to labour on demand.

† Knighton, col. 2599.

The state of the markets at this period is well depicted in the quaint language of Joshua Barnes:—"In the plague time, partly through great abundance, and partly also because, through the present apprehensions of death, men were less intent upon gain, a good horse, worth forty shillings before, might be bought for a mark, a large fat ox for four shillings, a cow for one shilling, a heifer for sixpence, a fat mutton for four-pence, a sheep for two-pence, a lamb for two pence, and a pork for five-pence; one stone

afflicted far more severely than the higher, still no rank was exempt; and we find that three prelates were one after another appointed to the archiepiscopal chair of Canterbury, and were swept off by the same scourge.

The better instructed people of all countries either endured the pestilence as an evil, the best repellant of which was resolution, or received it as a chastisement, the meet endurance of which was humility and repentance.* Not so the inferior orders, who, seeing themselves afflicted with ills, whose origin they could not discover, and whose infectious nature they would not credit, attributed the universal mortality to a general system of poisoning the wells; and with the same brutal and savage fury, which has since produced similar effects, and which will ever follow any strong excitement of an ignorant multitude, they laid the imaginary crime to the charge of any one whom more designing knaves had taught them to regard with hatred, and tore to pieces a multitude of unhappy wretches for acts they had never dreamed of perpetrating.

The Jews were the greatest sufferers; and many thousands were slaughtered in various parts of Europe in the most cruel and barbarous manner, notwithstanding the efforts of authority, and the exhortations of the church. At length, in the beginning of A. D. 1350, the pestilence began to assume a milder aspect; and though it lingered for some

of wool for nine-pence, and other things went at the same rate in England."—Barnes, p. 440.

* In consequence of the religious dread inspired by the disease in some countries of Europe, there arose a sect known by the name of Flagellants. They sprang up, according to Robert of Avesbury, in Holland, and with hats ornamented with a red cross before and behind, their bodies naked to the waist, and a scourge in their hands wherewith they drew blood from their naked backs, they walked through the greater part of Europe, sometimes howling penitential hymns, sometimes casting themselves on the ground with their arms extended in the form of a cross. Notwithstanding the doctrines of the Roman church in regard to the efficacy of corporeal penance, the pope had the good sense to see, that such disgusting exhibitions could answer no good purpose, moral, political, or religious; and his letters are still extant, addressed to several Christian princes, praying them to put down a sect that was a scandal to the church. It is necessary to remark, however, that in this as in every other plague, the effect of fear or of despair proved in many instances highly demoralizing.

months in various parts of Europe, before the end of that year it is spoken of as the "late tremendous visitation;" while all the letters and papers of the time afford a picture of the human mind looking up with renewed hope, though scarcely yet recovered from the power of fear.*

CHAPTER V.

THE COUNT OF FLANDERS MARRIES THE DAUGHTER OF THE DUKE OF BRABANT. —INFRACTION OF THE TRUCE BY BOTH PARTIES —ATTEMPT UPON CALAIS.— DEFEATED BY EDWARD III AND THE BLACK PRINCE —CHIVALROUS CONDUCT OF THE KING TOWARDS HIS PRISONERS —INSTITUTION OF THE ORDER OF THE GARTER —CHIVALROUS REPUTATION OF THE ENGLISH COURT —JOHN VISCONTI AND THOMAS DE LA MARCHE COME TO ENGLAND TO UNDERGO TRIAL BY BATTLE BEFORE EDWARD III —VISCONTI VANQUISHED.

THE presence of the pestilence served but little to stay the intrigues, or to calm the passions, of men; and though private morality, we are told, was upon the whole improved by the scourge of terror, yet we find the petty selfishness of policy as busy, in all its dark and tortuous ways, during the reign of that dreadful epidemic, as at any other period of history. Thus, between 1348 and 1350, a number of public events had taken place in various parts of Europe, which must be briefly noticed, as far as they affected the prosperity of England. With the Flemings the resolute conduct of the count, supported by the power of Philip, and the negotiations of the Duke of Brabant, brought about the objects desired by those three princes, notwithstanding the reluctance of Flanders and the opposition of England. The young count married the daughter of the duke, and the power of France and Brabant overawed the Flemings, who at length yielded to persuasions which were enforced

* I have in some degree abridged this account of the plague of the 14th century, in consequence of having heard that a very excellent work has been lately written expressly upon that subject.

by threats, and received their exiled sovereign under stipulations less advantageous to themselves than had been before proposed.*

Edward, who found opposition useless, was at length content to secure his own interests as far as possible; and through the mediation of the Earl of Lancaster, whom he created his general *locum tenens* on the continent, he entered into a treaty with the Count of Flanders, the most remarkable trait to be found in which is, that the sovereignty of France is tacitly conceded to the English monarch, and the name of Philip of Valois is never mentioned.† The people of Flanders generally renewed their oath of fidelity to Edward, as King of France; but whether the young count himself in person did homage to the English king *is more than doubtful.*‡

In the mean time the truce was prolonged from time to time between France and England, and was equally ill observed by both parties. Beyond doubt, Philip did not less openly violate the engagements to which he had bound himself than Edward; but, as the breach of the treaty of Malestroit lies heavily upon the King of France, from his evident infraction of his oath, so does the reproach of having most disgracefully broken the treaty of Calais, both in letter and in spirit, rest upon the English monarch. In the articles of truce it is clearly and distinctly stated, that each monarch thereby binds himself not to instigate any one, either openly or covertly, to injure or wage war upon his adversary; and yet, ere a year had passed, the public acts evince that Edward was giving the strongest encouragement to his partisans in Britanny to carry on a system of predatory hostilities against the King of France and his allies.§

The unsettled state of society, and the many campaigns which had preceded, had called into activity a number of those military plunderers who always spring up in troublous times, under different designations. They had been called in former days, free companions, Brabancois, and Cote-

* This was in truth and honour a violation of the treaty.

† A.D. 1348. Rymer, tom. iii. part i. pp. 45, 47.

‡ Barnes asserts that he did; but I do not find any public document which establishes the fact.

§ Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 25.

raux; and were now termed brigands,* from the peculiar sort of armour worn by those bodies of troops, into which they generally formed themselves.† These men, during active military operations, were encouraged and paid by each party, either to annoy and plunder the adversary in detached bodies, or to serve as mercenaries, in the ranks of a regular army. Whenever a truce supervened, abandoned by their former protectors, the brigands scattered themselves over the land; and in general each leader, whose talents and courage enabled him to collect a sufficient force, seized upon some strong post, and plundered the whole country round, while it remained in the disorganized condition to which every state is subject during a temporary suspension of hostilities after a severe and destructive campaign. Many of these men, by courage, talents, and the spirit of enterprise, gathered together large forces, obtained immense wealth, and acquired such a degree of renown, that monarchs courted them to their service by offers of fortune and honour. Amongst such, we find mentioned a brigand named Bacon, in Languedoc; and also two others. named Croquard and Caours, in Britanny.‡ No truce had any effect with them; and early in the year 1348, while the period of the treaty remained unexpired, Edward, in direct violation of his engagements, incited strongly the brigand Caours to pursue the war against France, by granting him a large sum, to be levied upon lands to be conquered by him from the enemy.§

If the homely but noble proverb, that honesty is the best

* The first formation of these bands in Italy, is placed by Muratori in the year 1339, at which period Mastino della Scala permitted Lodrisio Visconti, a fugitive at his court, to take into his service a large body of German cavalry, which had been sent to support the Scaligeri in their ambitious views in Italy. The prospect of plundering the Milanese was held out as an encouragement to all adventurers to join this force; and ere long Lodrisio Visconti had at his command a considerable army, which was called the company of St. George: and from that time, these bands obtained the name of *the companies*, and their members that of *companions*, throughout Italy.

† Froissart, chap. cccxxiv.

‡ Froissart, chap. cccxxv. Lobinau, vol. i. p. 342.

§ Rymer, tom. v. pp. 626 and 633. Edition 1727.

policy, be true—and most true it is—in regard to private individuals, how much more strikingly applicable is it to kings! for it is from their actions that we chiefly discover, in the prominent position wherein important facts are placed by history, that scarcely one recorded act of baseness in the range of time has not sooner or later drawn down punishment on the head of the offender, worked out by the simplest means.

The encouragement given by Edward to his brigand partisan led Caours to new aggressions, and many brilliant enterprises; in the course of which he made war with somewhat indiscriminate zeal on both parties alike, plundered the friends of De Montford, as well as the adherents of the house of Blois; and possessed himself of a great part of the territories held by the widow of the Lord de Clisson, then under the especial protection of the English king. Nor was this the only harvest that Edward reaped from the faithless stimulus he had afforded to the brigand's cupidity. Caours, well knowing that he could not retain both the lands of De Clisson and the service of Edward, accepted before long the liberal offers of the King of France; and, with the usual virulence of falsehood, pursued the English with more active hatred than he had before evinced towards the French. In a skirmish, near Auray, which took place not long after, the gallant Lord Dagworth suffered himself to be led into an ambush by the brigand;* and, after a long and terrible resistance, in which the whole of his companions fell around him, that famous officer was himself slain, having received five wounds before he died.†

It was not to be expected that, when the King of England did not scruple to violate the truce for so petty a purpose as promoting a desultory warfare of partisans in

* Knighton, col. 2602. Barnes, p. 445.

† The precise date of the death of Lord Dagworth is not known: Lobinau places it in the month of August, 1350; and he is probably correct in that statement, as we find in Rymer (tom. iii. part i. p. 57), that Sir Walter Bentley was appointed the king's *locum tenens* in Brittany, early in September of that year. The same author states the number of the men on each side, in the skirmish in which Dagworth fell, to have been, one hundred and twenty men-at-arms, almost all knights or squires, on the part of Caours, and on the part of Lord Dagworth, a hundred men-at-arms.

Britanny, Philip should hold himself bound by the treaty in points of greater importance. In the year 1348, the suspension of hostilities had nearly come to a natural conclusion at the expiration of the term for which it had been previously granted. The pope, indeed, incessantly urged its renewal, and a farther suspension was granted for six weeks, while Isabella,* Queen-mother of England, and the Queen of France, were appoined to negotiate a peace between Calais and Boulogne; but such large forces were collected in Artois and Picardy, that war seemed decided, and Edward himself proceeded to Sandwich,† in order to resume hostilities in person.

The truce, however, was prolonged; and all passed over in tranquillity, till towards the end of the following year, when Philip determined to attempt the recovery of Calais by corruption.‡ Several changes had taken place in the government of the city and the citadel, during the truce; and the defence of the castle, if not the town itself, had been intrusted to a Lombard§ officer, who is generally spoken of by the name of Aimery, or Almeric of Pavia. A free communication existed between Calais and the neighbouring country; and the truce appeared to be strictly maintained by both parties in that district. Taking advantage of the facilities which these circumstances afforded, Geoffrey de Charny, the governor of St. Omer, and one of the commissaries expressly appointed to maintain the truce,

* Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 41.

The nomination of Isabella to conduct this negotiation on the part of England would seem to imply that the state of dignified imprisonment in which she had been kept was by this time at an end.

† Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 44.

‡ Froissart states that the attempt upon Calais was made without the knowledge of Philip; but the number of the forces that were raised to take possession of the town renders such a supposition incredible.

§ Robert of Avesbury calls him a Genoese; but his name implies that he was a Lombard; and it is to be remarked, that the term Genoese was at this time very generally applied to all the mercenary soldiers furnished by Italy to the various sovereigns of Europe. The last person whose nomination to the government of Calais is mentioned by the state papers before the combat of Calais is John Beauchamp.—Rymer, tom. v. p. 655. Ed. 1727.

opened a correspondence with the Lombard captain, the object of which soon discovered itself. The cupidity for which the Lombards were at that time famous, seemed to offer the easiest possible means of obtaining possession of Calais; and a sum of twenty thousand florins was offered to Almeric of Pavia, on condition that he would deliver the castle to the French. The Italian was prevailed upon without difficulty to accept the proposal; and the subsequent arrangements for the payment of the bribe, and the execution of the treachery, were speedily determined. Geoffrey de Charny agreed to approach within a certain distance of the town on the night of the 1st of January,* bringing with him sufficient forces to master all opposition, if the way were once opened to the interior of the town. It was farther determined, that the money was to be paid by a small party of the French, who were to be detached on that night, for the purpose of examining the castle in order to insure the main body against treachery; and as a hostage for the security of the detachment, the son of the Lombard was to remain in the hands of the French without, during the absence of the scouts.

Several weeks intervened between the conclusion of this negotiation and the time appointed for the execution of the design,† and either remorse, fear of discovery, or a pre-

* 1–2 January, 1350. Robert of Avesbury, p. 181.

The year and the day on which this attempt took place have been very generally misstated from the printed copies of Froissart, placing it in 1348. All the best manuscripts, however, agree in saying that it occurred "en l'an de grace mil trois cent quarante neuf, droictment le premier jour de Janvier:" which, as in those times throughout France the commencement of the year was very generally placed at Easter, rendered it in fact the first of January, 1350. Robert of Avesbury says that it was "in crastino *circumcisionis Domini*," or the 2d of January; and therefore we may conclude that, according to our calculations, it took place between the night of the 1st and the morning of the 2d January, 1350.

† I have followed almost entirely the account of Robert of Avesbury, in opposition to that of Froissart and many others; because it is evident, from the letters preserved by the former, that he had access to the very best sources of information. In the present instance, he differs entirely from Froissart, who declares that Edward discovered the treachery of Almeric of Pavia, sent

vious determination to turn the stratagem of the French to their own disadvantage, led the Lombard to disclose the whole transaction to the King of England. The exertions which Edward had used to excite, in the highest degree, a chivalrous spirit in his people, had not been undertaken without the presence of the same spirit in his own heart, nor had been continued without producing an effect upon himself; and the result of the Lombard's communication was one of the most daring and extraordinary enterprises upon record.

He commanded Almeric of Pavia to persevere in his deceit to the last, and took active measures to make the French rue the attempt they were about to execute. As no standing army at that time existed, and a general summons to his nobles would have given the French sufficient warning of his purpose, Edward could only collect a very small body of troops,* which he placed under the command of the famous Walter de Mauny; and embarking at Dover, he himself accompanied them to Calais, together with the Black Prince his son. On arriving at that town,

for him to England, and after having reproached him severely, pardoned him, inasmuch as he had been bred up from infancy at the English court; but only did so on condition that he would affect to continue in the interest of France, and thus give the monarch the means of entangling the French in their own stratagem. The statement of Avesbury is directly the reverse. According to him, Edward was acquainted by Almeric with the whole proceeding; and it certainly is not at all probable that the king would have trusted so great a stake as the government of Calais to the good faith of a man who had deceived him in the manner which Froissart represents the Lombard to have done. On the other hand, however, it is clear that Almeric of Pavia was deprived of the office of governor soon after the defeat of De Charny.

* Froissart, chap. 327.

Robert of Avesbury does not state the number of the king's forces, but contents himself with saying, that the king went over secretly to Calais with a competent number of troops, adding afterwards, that the English did not amount to one half the numerical strength of the French. Froissart states that Edward went over with three hundred men-at-arms, and six hundred archers. He likewise mentions that Geoffrey de Charny had with him five hundred lances, which corresponds very nearly with the proportions given by Avesbury. Mezeray and Barnes nearly double the numbers on both sides.

which they reached after nightfall, he informed De Mauny, to whom he left the command, that it was his intention to fight disguised under his banner; and every preparation having been made, the approach of the French was waited for impatiently.

In the mean time a considerable force had been collected at St. Omer; and on the night appointed, Geoffrey de Charny, with a multitude of other knights and gentlemen, marched out for Calais, and reached the river and the bridge of Nieullay a little after midnight. A halt was now made; and some messengers were sent on to communicate with the governor, who was prepared to receive them.* On their report, Geoffrey de Charny advanced still further towards the town, leaving the bridge and the passages of the river guarded by a large body of crossbow-men under the command of the Lord de Fiennes and a number of other knights. At a little distance from the castle, he was met by Almeric of Pavia,† who yielded his son as a hostage, according to his promise;‡ and having received the greater portion of the money agreed upon, he led a party of the French over the principal part of the castle, to satisfy them of his sincerity. These measures of precaution having been employed, De Charny detached twelve knights and a

* Froissart, chap. cccxxvii.

† Robert of Avesbury.

‡ Beyond doubt, Almeric of Pavia calculated upon his son being retaken by the English forces, which was probably the case. What was really the cause of his dismissal from the post he occupied at Calais, seems not to be discovered; but it appears certain that he retired to a castle given him by Edward in the adjacent territory, where he continued for some time, leading a life of debauchery with a woman who had followed him from England. At length, however, De Charny, having paid his own ransom, returned to France, and having stormed the castle of Almeric of Pavia, he carried him off to St. Omer, where he caused him to be flayed alive in the market-place, alleging, that the Lombard had sworn on the communion to deliver Calais into his hands, and therefore well merited such a fate for having caused the death of so many brave knights. See Froissart, ed. de Buchon, tom. iii. 4 add. Barnes, p. 422. Throughout the remaining part of my account of this attempt upon Calais, I have combined the accounts of Froissart and Robert of Avesbury, which is not difficult: the former only giving the details of events which the other narrates more briefly.

hundred men-at-arms to take possession of the citadel, while he himself waited at one of the gates of the town with the principal part of his forces. No sooner had the French entered the castle, however, than the drawbridge was raised; the English soldiers poured out from the places in which they had hitherto been concealed, and the whole of the enemy who had passed the gates were obliged to surrender. In the mean while, Edward the Black Prince issued forth with a small body of troops by the gate near the sea, while De Mauny, with the king under his banner as a simple knight, proceeded to a sally-port which led into the fields. A considerable detachment from the division which accompanied the king was despatched to dislodge the troops at the bridge of Nieullay; and the rest, shouting "Mauny to the rescue! Mauny to the rescue!" advanced rapidly upon the forces of Geoffrey de Charny.

It now became evident to the French that they were betrayed; and some movement of fear at first took place. It was instantly remedied, however; and the leaders, causing their men to dismount, drew them up with their spears shortened to the length of five feet, to receive the charge of the adverse horse. The two bodies of English, when united, did not amount to more than one half the number of their enemies; but they contained the flower of those veteran warriors who had accompanied their victorious monarch through so many campaigns.

Pausing at a short distance from the enemy, the English men-at-arms dismounted also; and marching forward on foot, poured fiercely down upon the line of the French. A tremendous fight now ensued under the walls of Calais, raging hand to hand for several hours. The ranks of both parties were soon broken in the darkness; and the combatants separating into distinct groups, the spot around every banner became a field of battle. Edward and the Black Prince plunging into the thickest of the enemy, gave energy and spirit by their example, even to those soldiers who did not know the names of the two strange knights that thus seemed to seek out peculiar perils in such a field of carnage. From the moment the two armies joined, Edward had singled out the famous Eustace de Ribaumont, one of the most gallant knights in France; and more than

once during the course of the struggle, a brief combat had taken place between them, which had been interrupted by the various movements of those around them.

At length, towards day-break, Edward, with only thirty companions, found himself opposed to De Ribaumont once more, and the struggle was renewed between them. Twice the king was beaten down on his knee by the thundering blows of the French knight, and twice he rose again, and resumed the attack, till Geoffrey de Charny, with a large band, seeing the banner of De Mauny, which was by the king's side, defended by such scanty numbers, poured down upon the party of Edward, and interposing between him and his gallant adversary,* completely surrounded him. The blows now fell as thick as hail around the unknown monarch: Sir Guy Brian,† who bore the standard under which the king was fighting, though one of the strongest men and most gallant knights of the day, in the press of enemies, could hardly uphold the banner that floated above his royal master's head; and the peril of the king became each moment more and more imminent. But

* Robert of Avesbury says, that the English soldiers, in eager contention with the French, left the king with only thirty men-at-arms and a few archers, which Geoffrey de Charny perceiving, immediately surrounded their little group, on which Edward forgetting himself, shouted his battle cry, &c. Froissart declares that a fresh body of troops coming up separated the king from De Ribaumont; and from all the circumstances I have been led to conclude that they both alluded to the same incident, and that it was the arrival of De Charny that separated the monarch from his gallant adversary. Walsingham and the old manuscript which I have had occasion to cite more than once from Barnes, state that these events took place in a conflict with the troops at the bridge of Nieullay, but from all the best accounts it would appear that Edward was never at that spot.

† Edward granted to this gallant gentleman two hundred marks per annum, for his conduct in the late battle as standard-bearer. The terms of the king's grant would throw some doubt upon the story of Froissart, in regard to the king fighting under the banner of De Mauny, as Edward uses the expression *Vexillum nostrum:* but the words of Avesbury show that the king was disguised. The date of the letters patent, alluding to the late battle, (1s of April, 1350,) fix the year; and as they speak of a promise of reward for the same service, made on the 15th of January last past, the season of the year is also very clearly determined.

still Edward fought on, hewing his way into the midst of the enemy, till at length, in the eager impetuosity of the moment, forgetting his incognito, he accompanied his exertions by loud shouts of his customary war-cry, exclaiming at each blow, "A Edward St. George, à Edward St. George!"* At that redoubted name,† and the many memories it recalled, the French men-at-arms recoiled from before the monarch; the sounds reached the Prince of Wales, who had been fighting in another part of the field, and rushing forward to his father's rescue, he poured his knights upon the rear of De Charny's party, and the space around the king was speedily cleared.‡ The rout of the French soon became complete, and scarcely one man of note, who had come thither in the hope of taking possession of Calais, left the ground alive and free. In the confusion which followed, Edward again encountered De Ribaumont, who, separated from the monarch by the charge of Geoffrey de Charny, had not heard the war-cry which announced the King of England's presence to those immediately near him. The conflict between them now was short. The French knight beheld almost all his noblest companions dead or taken, his party completely defeated, and all prospect of escape cut off. He therefore soon dropped the point of his sword to his unknown adversary, and saying, "Sir knight, I yield me your prisoner," he surrendered to Edward himself.

In the mean time, the troops which had been despatched to the bridge of Nieullay, had defeated the French forces left to guard the passage, and cleared the ground towards

* Robert of Avesbury.

† According to the account of Froissart, the French did not know, till they were carried prisoners into Calais, that the king had been present in the battle; but the statement of Robert of Avesbury is precise, both in regard to the king having unguardedly shouted his battle cry, and to the effect it produced upon the enemy. His words are "Et cum Francigeni hæc verba audissent ab eo, fuerant attoniti quòd perdiderunt animum, sicut unus nobilis miles de eisdem Francigenis ibidem captus posteà narravit." It is not unlikely, however, that De Ribaumont, who was at the time separated from the king by the party of De Charny, might not hear or understand the words of the English monarch.

‡ Barnes, p. 425.

St. Omer, though several detached parties, following the fugitives too far, became the victims of their own impetuosity, and were taken by those they had been pursuing.

Early in the day, Edward returned to Calais in triumph, carrying with him thirty French nobles as prisoners, while two hundred more remained dead beneath the walls of the city. Of the prisoners, Geoffrey de Charny seems to have been the most severely wounded; but the injuries which even he received must have been but slight, since he was enabled to take his place at supper with his comrades in captivity on the subsequent evening.

We find on many occasions, that the victors in a struggle, such as that which had taken place before Calais, entertained their prisoners in a very sumptuous manner; a custom which might be looked upon as a vain and cruel triumph, did we not find that it was always accompanied by those acts of chivalrous courtesy which show its real object to have been the more generous purpose of assuaging the first pangs of disappointment and defeat. The usual part of the conquerors on these occasions was to soothe and to console, to attribute their own success to chance, and to magnify the valour and conduct of their prisoners; while the captives endeavoured to evince resignation without depression, and fortitude without presumption.

In the evening after the battle, one of these grand festivals celebrated the new success of the English monarch; and, according to custom, the captives were invited to partake of the banquet of their conqueror. Edward, magnificently robed, and wearing a chaplet of fine pearls upon his head, received his guests in the great hall of the castle; and water having been handed to each to wash, as was then usual, he seated himself at the head of the chief table, and, surrounded by his prisoners, commenced the repast.* The first course was placed upon the table by the hands of the Black Prince and his knights; a duty which, like that of sewer and cup-bearer, was constantly performed at the court of sovereigns by the noblest and highest in the land. After having rendered this service, the prince and his com-

* Froissart.

panions seated themselves at another board, and were served in turn.

When the banquet was concluded, the tables were raised; and the English monarch remained for some time in conversation with his guests. At length, proceeding from the top of the room, where he had been speaking with the persons near him, he passed through the hall, addressing a few words to each of the other prisoners as he advanced. To Geoffrey de Charny those words were not peculiarly gentle; but when the monarch approached De Ribaumont, a smile of generous pleasure brightened his countenance, and he said, "Sir Eustace, you, of all knights in this world that ever I yet saw, are the best either in assailing your enemy or defending yourself; and never in any battle did I find one who gave me so much to do, hand to hand, as you have done this morning. I award you, therefore, the prize of this day's combat, as do all my knights, by general consent."

He then took the circlet of pearls from his head, and placing it on that of De Ribaumont, continued,—"Sir Eustace, I give this wreath to you as the best combatant of the day, whether of those from within or those from without the walls, and I beg you to wear it a year for the love of me. I know that you are gallant and gay, and willingly find yourself where ladies are, so tell them, wherever you go, that I gave it to you. Moreover, as you are my prisoner, I liberate you from your captivity; you are free to go whithersoever you please."*

The reply of the French knight was full of gratitude and admiration; and wine and spices having been brought in, according to the custom of the day, the assembly broke up. Edward the next morning presented De Ribaumont with two horses, and twenty florins to cover the expenses of his journey to the next French town; and shortly after the English monarch set sail himself, with his other prisoners, for England.

Such an exploit as that performed by the King of England on the occasion whereof I have just spoken, would, if undertaken in the present day, deserve and receive but very

* Froissart.

qualified praise. At the time when Edward achieved it, however, the state of society, and even his own political views, without diminishing his personal risk, rendered the action less deserving of the name of imprudence. As we have before observed, one great object which the king kept in view through the whole of his early life seems to have been to raise and support a spirit of chivalrous daring amongst his people, which might at once counterbalance the smallness of their own numbers by the greatness of their own exertions, and might draw to his service all those adventurous leaders, whose aggregate force in Europe rendered their aid of no small importance.

Edward was well aware that nothing was so likely to awaken and sustain the enthusiasm which he strove to promote amongst his subjects, as the personal example of their monarch; and the enterprising nature of his individual character, of course, added weight to the political motives which led him to expose himself in a manner that would now be termed romantic.

The victory at Calais, and the chivalrous feats of the king, spread joy and admiration through the country, which was now just beginning to recover from the terrible scourge which had so lately visited it; and the splendid institution of a new order of knighthood, which almost immediately followed, increased the renown and dignity of the English court.*

* The institution of the order of the Garter has been so generally attributed to the year 1349, that it is necessary to give some reason for embracing the opinion of by far the scantiest portion of those who have written upon the subject. I have done so for many reasons, but especially because in 1349 the pestilence was raging in England, with the most fearful violence; so much so, that at the very period of the year at which we know the order was instituted, Edward prorogued the parliament *sine die*, as it was found impossible to assemble many persons together without the most fatal consequences. Those who place the institution in that year, avoid the difficulty, by removing the plague to the one preceding; but all the public acts show, that during March and April of 1349 the country round London was hardly habitable from the pestilence. It is not to be supposed, therefore, that Edward held such festivities at so awful a moment; and we know that the first solemnity of the kind took place on St. George's day, in April. The probability of its having taken place in the following year

The symbolical origin of the decoration which gives a name to the order of the Garter is somewhat obscure; but although the accounts long current of the amours of Edward III. and the Countess of Salisbury* are proved to be false in so many particulars, that the whole tale becomes more than doubtful, yet the statement which connects her name with the famous institution of which I now write is neither disproved nor improbable. That a lady might accidentally drop her garter in the midst of the court is certainly within the bounds of possibility; and that a gallant and graceful monarch might raise it from the ground, and rebuke the merriment of his nobles by the famous words "Honi soit qui mal y pense," is not at all unlikely. Another story, however, is told by the famous historian of the order, which is still more probable. The queen herself is said to have met with the same accident on quitting the king on some occasion of ceremony. Several persons trod upon the blue riband, of which the garter was composed; and at length Edward himself raised it, saying he would employ that riband in such a way that men should show it greater reverence. He then carried it to the queen, asking playfully what she imagined the court would think of such an occurrence, to which she made the famous reply which affords the motto of the order.

It has been argued, that such an accident as the loss of a lady's garter was unworthy as a cause for so noble an

is increased by the fact, that almost all the members of the order can be then shown to be in London, which is not the case with regard to the year before.

* I have before had occasion to notice the errors in regard to Edward and the Countess of Salisbury. During the whole of that monarch's reign there were but two persons who were entitled to that name, the lady Catherine Grandison, wife of the first earl, who was at least fifteen years older than the king, and Elizabeth de Mohun of Dunster, wife of William the second earl, who was not, however, married at the time of which we speak. The person, however, whom Froissart is supposed, by some people, to have meant, was the beautiful Joan Plantagenet, daughter of the Earl of Kent, who had been affianced at a very early age to the young Earl of Salisbury. The marriage, however, never took place, Thomas Lord Holland having a pre-contract with her father, which was legally confirmed; and before the institution of the Garter, she had become the wife of Lord Holland, never having been Countess of Salisbury.

institution; but matters of less import have often produced events of far greater consequence; and when Edward at first adopted a garter as the badge of an order he was about to found, he did not probably contemplate giving to that order all the solemnity which afterwards accompanied its progress. No suppositions, of all the many which have been raised in regard to the origin of the order, offer so reasonable an explanation of the words embroidered on the garter; and as it was the common custom of chivalrous times for knights to carry both into the lists and to the battle field, any part of their lady's dress which could be obtained as a boon, the ordinary tale connected with the institution is well in harmony with the habits of the day.*

The Castle of Windsor had been at all times the favourite residence of Edward III.; and some time after the solemn feast of the Round Table, which had been held in that place, he began the erection of a splendid chapel dedicated to St. George, the service of which he committed to eight canons endowed with princely revenues. On this building, as on the chapel of St. Stephen at Westminster,† which was completed about the same time, the king himself bestowed great care and attention, and no expense was spared to render it magnificent. The famous William of Wickham, afterwards Bishop of Winchester, whose architectural skill is well known, superintended the improvements of Windsor; and from the high esteem in which he deservedly stood with the English monarch, his name has been inseparably attached to the most distinguished order of knighthood in Europe.

At length, when the building of the chapel was sufficiently advanced to permit the celebration of divine service, a general tournament was announced; and on St. George's day, the 23d of April, A. D. 1350, the king with the Prince of Wales‡ and twenty-four other knights, proceeded bareheaded to the chapel, where mass was performed by the

* Some authors carry the first idea of the institution of this order up to Richard Cœur de Lion; and Joshua Barnes soars away with it to the Samothracians.

† Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 52.

‡ I have not found it necessary to speak more largely of the origin or history of an order which has been so voluminously

Bishop of Winchester. Returning thence to the banqueting hall, the kinghts, clothed in the robes prescribed, took their seats; and the first grand festival of the order of the Garter was held, in nearly the same form, we are told, as that which has descended to the present day.*

Military sports succeeded, in which many of the captive lords of France and Scotland took a part.† The king himself, with the Black Prince, the first knight of the new order, were amongst the challengers; and the following whimsical motto, it is said, decorated the shield of the sovereign, together with the figure of a white swan chained by a golden collar:—

> "Hey, hey! the white swan,
> By God's soul, I am thy man."

The court of England was now the most renowned in

discussed by Ashmole. The names of the first knights, or founders as they are called may not, however, be uninteresting. 1. Edward III.; 2. Edward Prince of Wales; 3. Henry Earl of Lancaster; 4. Thomas Beauchamp Earl of Warwick; 5. The Captal de Buch; 6. Ralph Earl of Stafford; 7. William Earl of Salisbury; 8. Roger Lord Mortimer; 9. John Lord de Lisle; 10. Bartholomew Lord Burghersh; 11. John Lord Beauchamp; 12. John Lord Mohun of Dunster; 13. Hugh Lord Courtney; 14. Thomas Lord Holland; 15. John Lord Grey de Codenor; 16. Sir Richard Fitz Simon; 17. Sir Miles Stapleton; 18. Sir Thomas Wale; 19. Sir Hugh Wrottesly; 20. Sir Nele Loring; 21. Lord John Chandos; 22. Lord James Audley; 23. Sir Otho Holland; 24. Sir Henry Eam of Brabant; 25. Sir Sancho Dambrecicourt of Hainault; 26. Sir William Pavely.

* See Ashmole's Hist. of the Garter.

† The King of Scotland, the Counts of Eu and Tancarville, and Charles of Blois, are all mentioned by Stow as taking part in these festivities. The Count of Eu and Guisnes is said to have particularly distinguished himself and to have borne away the prize of the first day's tournament. Certain it is that he rose high in the favour of the English monarch, who soon after admitted him to ransom, and suffered him to return to France. By that time, John Duke of Normandy had ascended the throne of France; and in consequence of some suspicion, excited, it is said, by an intercepted letter, he caused the unhappy constable to be immediately arrested, confined him in the Hôtel de Nesle, and struck off his head without form of trial. The execution, or rather murder—for every man put to death by the arm of power, without legal trial, is murdered—took place on the 19th of November, 1350, in presence of the Count of Armagnac, the Duke of Bourbon, and several others.

Europe for feats of chivalry and deeds of prowess; and a striking instance of the estimation in which Edward himself was held followed soon after the institution of the Garter. Early in the month of June, letters were received by the English monarch, signed by Thomas de la Marche, a natural son, it is said, of Philip of Valois, praying that a safe-conduct might be granted to him and thirty attendants to visit England, he being bound by oath to meet in arms John de Visconti, for the purpose of repelling, in judicial combat, to take place in the presence of Edward himself, certain accusations brought against him by the Italian.* The king's letters of protection were immediately issued; and the two adversaries soon after arrived at Westminster, when it appeared that each had held a high station in the army of the King of Sicily, then labouring to subdue the southern part of that island.† While lying before Catania, Visconti had, in presence of the assembled council of the army, charged the Bastard of France with holding negotiations with the enemy, and with receiving bribes to deliver the Sicilian king and several members of his council into the hands of his adversaries. A number of other accusations were added to these serious imputations, but were unsupported by proof; and to all and each the bastard gave the lie direct. To prevent the evil consequences which such charges, and the quarrels consequent thereon, might cause in the army, the council bound the two opponents by oath to submit to its decree, and, after a long deliberation, ordered them to proceed peacefully to England, and there, in presence of the chivalrous court of Edward III., to terminate their difference by single combat.

* Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 54.

† The whole account of this quarrel, as given by Barnes from the statements of our own chroniclers, is shown to be erroneous by the manifesto of Edward himself (Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 58), in which he sets forth the cause of the duel, the principal circumstances, and the event. By this document it appears, that instead of serving in Armenia, as stated by Barnes, the two combatants had been serving in the army of the King of Sicily, then besieging Catania. The charge brought by Visconti against the Bastard of France was, that he had combined with a certain Leonard de Assis to sieze the king, and to deliver him into the hands of the enemy.

The accusation and the denial were repeated before the king; and Edward immediately named the 4th of October as the day, and the tilt-yard of the palace of Westminster as the place, for deciding the quarrel of the two strangers.* At the appointed time, Edward himself, the Black Prince, the whole court, and an immense concourse of people being present, the combatants appeared, armed at all points; and, having taken the usual oaths against employing secret weapons, charms, or other unlawful means, they were admitted to the lists. The lances were then delivered, the signal given, and, spurring forward their horses, they met in full career. Though both knights kept their seat, the tough ash spears were shivered in a moment, and, springing to the ground, they recommenced the strife on foot. At the first shock, Visconti was hurled to the ground; but again starting up, he maintained the combat for several minutes, till, closing with each other, they went down together, and rolled in deadly struggle upon the ground. At length, however, the bastard obtained the superiority; and, holding down his foe, was about to put him to death,† when Edward at the prayer of his nobles, who unanimously declared Visconti vanquished, dropped his wardour, as a signal that the combat was at an end. The heralds then interposed; and the innocence of the bastard being held as clearly established, the Italian, according to the articles of battle, became his lawful prisoner. The victor contented himself, however, with yielding his fallen accuser to the Black Prince; and having, as a deed of devotion, dedicated the armour in which he had fought to the English patron St. George, he was entertained for some days at the court of Edward, with chivalrous splendour; and then dismissed with presents to his native land, where a less happy fate awaited him.*

* Rymer, vol. ii. part i. p. 58.

† Barnes declares that the Bastard of France had short spikes attached to his right gauntlet, which as they rolled on the ground he struck through the bars of Visconti's visor. The account of Edward, however, is more honourable to the French knight. He says, speaking of the bastard, "Nullam omnino in dicta pugna, habuit læsionem: sed jam gratiose devicit, quòd opus divinum videbatur potiùs quam humanum."

* Several accounts state that Thomas de la Marche, the bastard

CHAPTER VI.

PIRACIES OF THE SPANIARDS.—DEATH OF ALPHONSO.—ACCESSION OF PETER THE CRUEL.—HIS CONDUCT IN REGARD TO THE REMONSTRANCES OF EDWARD.—THE SPANISH FLEETS SWEEP THE BRITISH CHANNEL.—BATTLE OF WINCHELSEA.—EXPLOITS AND DANGER OF THE KING OF ENGLAND.—DANGER OF THE BLACK PRINCE.—ESCAPE OF COUNT ROBERT OF NAMUR.—DEFEAT OF THE SPANIARDS.—DEATH OF PHILIP OF VALOIS.—ACCESSION OF JOHN I.—FAMOUS BATTLE OF THE THIRTY.—DEFEAT OF THE MARECHAL DE NESLE.—CAPTURE OF GUISNES.—PACIFIC APPEARANCES.

NOTWITHSTANDING the treaties which had taken place, and the alliances which had been proposed between England and Spain, the Spanish pirates had never ceased to carry on a series of aggressions upon the English vessels trading in the Bay of Biscay, totally destructive to the British commerce in that quarter. Ships were every day taken, and the crews butchered in cold blood; and a thousand angry expostulations had chequered the more friendly negotiations which passed between Edward and Alphonso XI. The death of the English princess Joan brought the transactions regarding a permanent alliance to an untimely conclusion; and the same pestilence which destroyed the hopes to which those transactions had given rise, carried away also the gallant monarch of Spain.* Peter, better known by the name of Peter the Cruel—a prince whose character has been represented in the most opposite lights by various historians,—succeeded to the Castilian throne, and all the first acts of his reign tended to support the pirates that infested the English seas. Remonstrance proved in vain; even the trading vessels of the Spaniards

brother of King John, was put to death by that monarch after his return from England; and all agree that he was disgraced for submitting to fight under the judgment of any other king than that of France,—a petty act of jealousy unworthy of King John.

* Alphonso died of the plague before Gibraltar, in March, 1350, according to Matteo Villani, Mariana, and others.

carried on the same covert warfare against the ships of England; and on threats of retaliation being held out by Edward, followed by preparations to carry those threats into effect,* the Spanish monarch despatched strong reinforcements to the fleet which already swept the English Channel; and Edward had but the alternative of seeing his trade for ever destroyed, his subjects put to death, and his flag insulted, or to end such evils by vigorous hostilities on his own part.

The Spanish fleet, carrying off, in its passage through the Channel, a number of the English merchantmen returning from Bordeaux, put into Sluys, and prepared to sail back in triumph with the prizes, and the merchandize which it had acquired. Anticipating obstruction, however, the Spaniards filled up their complement of men, strengthened themselves by all sorts of artillery used in that day, and set sail on their return to Spain, with one of the most formidable armadas that had ever put to sea.†

In the mean while Edward had collected, on the coast of Sussex, a fleet intended to oppose them, which he

* Matteo Villani, book i. cap. 99.

† Dr. Henry, Rapin, and almost all the other English historians, give a very wrong view of these events, stating the Spanish fleet to have consisted merely of pirates; and representing the effort which crushed them merely as a casual exploit of the chivalrous King of England; but all the best authorities agree in declaring that the Spanish fleet was one of extraordinary strength, that it was furnished with everything that could tend to render it victorious, and that it was despatched to Sluys expressly by the King of Spain. Nor do the terms of Edward's own letters and proclamations at all justify the supposition that the matter was one of small consequence, or that the danger was such as could arise from pirates alone. In one place he says that the Spaniards, "immensâ classe, in partibus Flandriæ, per ipsos congregatâ, et, gentibus armatis vallatâ, nedùm se navigium nostrum in totum velle destruere et mari Anglicano dominari jactare præsumunt, sed regnum nostrum invadere, populumque nobis subjectum exterminio subdere velle, expressè comminantur," &c. (Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 55.) In an after paper also (p. 56), he still further states the aggression of the Spaniards, and informs his people that they demand the lordship of the seas, threaten loudly to destroy his fleets, and that they have actually committed various acts of direct hostility. The other particulars are stated in Walsingham, page 169, Mathew Villani, chap. 99, book i., and in Knighton, col. 2602 et cetera.

determined to command in person; and as soon as he received intelligence that their ships were about to put to sea, he set out for Winchelsea and embarked in order to intercept them on their return to Spain. The queen accompanied the monarch to the sea-coast, and Edward the Black Prince, now in the twentieth year of his age, was appointed to command one of the largest vessels in the royal fleet. Prince John also—afterwards more famous as John of Gaunt—at the earnest entreaty of the Black Prince, with whom he was a peculiar favourite, accompanied his brother to witness, for the first time, those warlike feats, in which his tender age* prevented him from sharing, and a number of the most distinguished officers in England were appointed to command the other ships

The Spanish leaders had prepared themselves to meet an enemy; and at Sluys they had caused their vessels to be furnished with large wooden towers called Breteskes, which gave a commanding station to the crossbow-men. Immense bars of iron, for sinking the ships of their adversary, were also added; and we find not only that in number of fighting men the Spaniards were, when compared with the English, as ten to one, but that their vessels were of infinitely greater size.† The day on which they would make

* He was then but ten years old.

† The particulars of this battle, confirmed in every respect by the English historians and the public acts, I take from the copies of Froissart as published by M. Buchon and Mr. Johnes of Hafod. In the edition of M. Buchon, to which I shall have frequent cause to refer, there is an addition to the printed copies usually published, of twenty-two chapters which were discovered by Monsieur Dacier in the manuscript copy of the Prince of Soubise. The place of these chapters had before been supplied in the printed copies by an extract taken almost word for word from the Grand Chronicle of St. Denis. Mr. Johnes of Hafod had found in two manuscripts, which he possessed, a part of the additional matter discovered by Monsieur Dacier; and on seeing that the accuracy of the Soubize copy was thus confirmed by two other excellent manuscripts, M. Buchon, with great judgment, rejected the extract from the Chronicles of St. Denis to an Appendix, and substituted the true reading of Froissart in the proper place. From this addition my relations will be made as far as the battle of Poitiers; and I make these remarks, inasmuch as those who possess printed copies of Froissart published prior to 1824 will not find in them the passages to which I allude.

their appearance had been calculated with great nicety; and Edward on board his own ship, waited impatiently for their approach, causing, by way of pastime, the musicians who accompanied him to play an air which the famous Chandos had brought from Germany. The king, we are told, insisted, jestingly, that the knight should sing the air with the musicians; but, from time to time, he was seen to turn his eye to the watcher in the mast head; and shortly after the music was interrupted by the cry of "A sail!" Another and another was announced, and at length the number that appeared exceeded calculation. Edward immediately ordered wine to be brought, and having drank one cup with his knights, he cast away the cap with which his head had been covered; and putting on his casque, he closed his visor for the day.

The Spanish vessels now came gallantly on, with their tops battlemented and filled with crossbow-men and engineers, the decks covered with men-at-arms, and the banners and pennons of different knights and commanders flying on every mast. As they had the wind directly in their favour, and were still at a considerable distance from the English fleet, they could have avoided the combat with ease, if such had been their purpose; but on the contrary, they steered direct towards the shore from which Edward was now drawing out, and came up, a few hours before nightfall, in order of battle. The king himself led the English line, and, according to the usual custom, steered direct against a large Spanish ship, endeavouring to run her down with his prow. The shock was tremendous; but the enemy's vessels were both larger and stronger than those of the English; and as the two ships recoiled from each other, it was found that the one which contained the English monarch had sprung a leak, and was rapidly sinking. In the confusion which followed, the Spanish vessel passed on; but Edward immediately ordered his bark to be lashed to one of the enemy; and after a severe struggle, made himself master of a more seaworthy ship than his own.

The battle now was raging on all sides; and while the English strove to grapple with and board the enemy, the Spaniards poured upon them a shower of bolts and quarrels

from their crossbows, and hurled immense masses of stone from the military engines with which they were provided. In the midst of this engagement, England had nearly suffered an irreparable loss, in the death of Edward the Black Prince. Fixing on one of the largest and most important of the enemy's ships, the prince steered directly towards her; but as he came up, the military engines of the enemy, discharging their missiles with too true an aim, pierced his vessel in several places; so that by the time he ran alongside of his adversary, his bark, like that of his father, was absolutely sinking. The only chance for safety seemed now the speedy capture of the other ship: but the sides of the enemy were far higher than those of the English vessel; they were defended also at every point by men-at-arms; and while the young commander endeavoured in vain to force his way in sword in hand, the Spaniards poured down upon his head a shower of bolts and arrows, and masses of stone, and his own vessel filled with water far faster than it could be baled out by all the efforts of the seamen. Though the gallant prince fought with the courage of despair, he was repulsed in every attempt to board; and his own fate, as well as that of his young and favourite brother, and all their brave companions, seemed sealed, when the exertions made by the mariners to keep the water under caught the attention of the Earl of Lancaster, as he was sweeping by in his own ship to the attack of another of the Spanish vessels. Instantly altering his course, he dashed alongside of the ship with which the prince was contending, and grappled with her also.

The forces of the Spaniards were now divided; the English forced their way through on both sides; and after a fierce but short struggle, in which quarter* was neither given nor asked, the Spanish ship remained in the hands of the Black Prince. Hardly was the conquest completed, and the English vessel cleared of its crew, when it filled and went down before the eyes of those whom it had so

* The words of Walsingham are,—"Hispani timidi et superbi atque fidentes in robore suo et strenuitate dedignantur se reddere, jussu regis Edwardi, omnes miserabiliter perierunt, alii ferro cæsii, alii aquis submersi." It would seem, however, that the word timidi should be read tumidi.

lately borne in its frail bosom across the sea that now swallowed it.

I shall but pause to notice the adventures of one other ship, called the King's Hall, the command of which had been given by Edward III. to Count Robert of Namur, who arriving accidentally in England, had besought the king to let him bear a share in the enterprise which he was about to undertake against the Spaniards. During the whole of the action, that young nobleman pursued the task he had undertaken with the utmost gallantry; but at length, towards night, he engaged a Spanish vessel more than twice the size of that which he commanded, and attempted in vain to force his way on board. His adversaries, seeing that their fleet had lost the day, set all sail; but looking upon the bark beside them as an easy prey for a more tranquil moment, they grappled closely with Count Robert of Namur; and in the increasing darkness bore his vessel along with them, in spite of all his efforts either to free himself, or to delay their flight. In this manner he was carried swiftly on in the twilight, and passed the ship of the English king himself, shouting loudly for aid, but shouting in vain. At length a varlet, or attendant, of the young count, named Hennekin, by a bold attempt, saved his master and the vessel. Springing suddenly on board the Spanish ship, bearing a naked sword in his hand, with one bound he reached the mast, attached to which were the four ropes which in that day suspended the main sheet, and by a single and vigorous blow divided the whole mass of cordage. The sail fell at once to the deck; and the Spaniards, rushing forward to remedy the disaster which delayed their progress, left the sides of the vessel unguarded: Count Robert and his followers poured in; and a combat ensued, which ended in the capture of the Spanish ship. By this time twenty-four* of the enemy's vessels had been taken; the rest were either sunk or in full flight; and Edward, with one more glorious victory added to the

* Walsingham states that twenty-six of the large Spanish vessels were taken, but the old manuscript of Corpus College says only twenty-four: other accounts differ still farther, in regard to the numbers, and some reduce it to seventeen.

list, soon measured back the short distance of sea which lay between the spot where it had been won and the English shore. By this time night had fallen; but, mounting on horseback, the king, the Prince of Wales, and his young brother, rode direct to the Abbey, where the queen had been left; and which, situated on a high ground, commanded a view of the whole sea, so that Philippa had thence beheld the innumerable sails of the enemy, as they rose above the bosom of the waters, and had watched the engagement till the darkness had shut out the anxious scene from her eyes, and left her to suspense.*

The complete defeat that the Spaniards had suffered, notwithstanding all the vast preparations which they had made, and the evident demonstration given by Edward of pressing the war with vigour, soon produced a negotiation for peace between the two countries. Commissioners were accordingly appointed to treat on the part of the King of England, and a truce of twenty years was ultimately concluded.

Shortly before the commencement of the war with Spain, Edward's first adversary was removed by death from that busy stage on which he had played neither a happy nor a glorious part. Philip of Valois died at Nogent de Roy on the 22d of August, 1350.† His flatterers had called him

* The date of this great victory is very obscure; Barnes, following the greater part of the old English chronicles, places it on the 29th of August; but I find in Rymer, tom. iii. part i. pp. 56, 59, two papers which seem to prove that the battle did not take place till much later in the year. The first time we find any public mention made of the engagement is on the 2d of November, in a letter of pardon to one Thomas Banastre for homicide, granted on account of good services done in this action, which Edward speaks of as something just past; and it is clear, from powers to treat with the Spanish officers, which follow (page 60), that on the 11th of November the fugitives from the fight off Winchelsea were still in Flanders, to which they had fled. Nevertheless the statement of Barnes is confirmed in some degree by the dates of two other state papers: the one, mentioning the proposed war with Spain, and ordering prayers for the king's success, as if he were just about to set out, is dated Rotherhithe, on the 10th of August; and then, after a vacancy of twenty-four days, giving sufficient time for the battle to have taken place, we find a letter from Winchelsea, dated 3d of September, Rymer, tom. iii. part i. pp. 55, 56.

† Joan of Burgundy, Queen of France, and Bona of Luxemburgh, Duchess of Normandy, both died in 1349, during the height

the Fortunate: but never was flattery less happy in an epithet; for, perhaps, in the range of history, we shall not find a monarch who had greater advantages or less success. Nor was his misfortune alone confined to his lifetime; even his memory has been unfortunate; and in the number of foolish or of evil actions that he committed, all better deeds have been forgotten.

To him succeeded his eldest son, John, Duke of Normandy, who was immediately afterwards crowned King of France at Rheims,* without any formal protest or opposition that I can discover on the part of the King of England. The pope immediately interested himself to procure some final arrangement of the differences† between the monarchs of England and France; and as Edward's parliaments showed no inclination to support him vigorously in carrying on the war, the English king willingly embraced the pro-

of the great pestilence, though whether of that disease or not I do not know. Philip of Valois and his son married again in January and February of the following year; and it is said that the fair Blanche of Navarre, who became Queen of Philip, was at first destined for John; but that the king took advantage of his son's absence to marry her himself. If so, the Duke of Normandy did not very long lament her loss; for within three weeks of the marriage of his father he himself led a new bride to the altar.

* 26th Sept. 1350.

† Nothing can be more admirable, nothing more noble, than the unwearied, inexhaustible zeal with which the popes pursued the glorious work of pacification; and to those who read the history of the wars between France and England, the supreme pontiffs appear in a new light while occupied in this office of mercy, and striving to promote charity and peace and good will, amongst the struggling passions and selfish animosities of men. They encountered a thousand rebuffs, they suffered the mortification of seeing their best plans for the good of others thwarted by the vile covetousness of those they sought to serve, their most strenuous efforts wasted upon unthankful kings; but yet they strove on against resistance, neglect, and insult, with an enthusiasm and a perseverance worthy of a high calling and a pure religion. They had faults and follies, doubtless, for they were men; and those faults and follies often showed themselves in these very negotiations for peace; but that they or their courts were so corrupt and vicious as the licentious virulence of satirists have represented them will not be received, without a lingering doubt, by any one who marks them pursuing with patience, humility, and zeal one of the noblest ends proposed to a Christian by his religion.

posal of a continued truce, while John, on his part, seemed desirous of habituating himself to royalty, and his subjects to obedience, before he renewed the struggle with so potent an adversary. That extension of the truce, therefore, which had been arranged at Calais on the 13th of June, forty days before the death of Philip,* was immediately confirmed by his son, though he soon gave sufficient signs of his inclination to pursue the war. Early in the year 1351, he began the concentration of large forces upon the Loire;† and had Edward been enabled to act with vigour, it is beyond a doubt that hostilities would have recommenced on his part also. The original truce, however, with various modifications, was renewed from time to time, though not without intervals of several weeks, which allowed each monarch an opportunity of attempting, by force or fraud, to wring something from the other. Nor was the war entirely suspended between the partisans of the two countries, even during the absolute existence of a truce; for the whole of the year 1351 appears to have passed in continual skirmishes, none of which are without interest, though none produced any important results.

The first and most famous of these casual combats is that known by the name of The Battle of the Thirty, which cannot be passed over without more particular notice. The death of Dagworth had left a deep thirst for vengeance on the minds of the English soldiers remaining in Britanny, which not all the efforts of Sir Walter Bentley‡ were sufficient to restrain during the suspension of arms; and the governor of Ploermel,§ Sir Richard Bambro', with very little regard to the terms of the truce, pursued his revenge in every way that presented itself. To put a stop to the ravages of the latter, the famous Beaumanoir proposed to the English officer a single combat; which Bambro' declined,‖ saying, that it was not sufficient to satisfy him; but

* Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 60.

† Rymer, tom, iii. part i. p. 63.

‡ Lobinau, liv. x. p. 343.

§ Barnes calls him Sir Richard Bembre. Froissart spells his name Brandebourgh, and it is elsewhere written Bamborough, which is probably right, though the Breton writers universally make it Brambro'.

‖ Froissart, add. 7

adding that, if Beaumanoir chose to select twenty or thirty of his companions, he on his part would do the same, and would give him battle when he chose. The other instantly accepted the defiance: the preliminaries were soon adjusted; and the two parties met on the 27th of March 1350, at a tree called the Half-way Oak, from its position* between Ploermel and Château Josselin, the fortress of Beaumanoir. Thirty appeared on each side; the French party consisting of nine knights and twenty-one squires, all Bretons; while the number of combatants on the part of England was made up by the addition of four Bretons and six Germans or Flemings, only twenty native Englishmen being found in Ploermel.

An immense multitude of spectators had received letters of safe-conduct from both sides, on condition that they should in no degree aid or favour either party during the battle; and early in the morning the whole ground was thronged, except the space enclosed for the combatants. The English arrived first, but did not wait long before Beaumanoir and his companions appeared; and the whole having dismounted, a parley of a few minutes was held to arrange the conditions of the contest. By these conditions each man was allowed to use what arms he pleased; the survivors of the vanquished party were to become prisoners of the victors; and no one was to fly from the field; but each was either to die or yield.† This having been settled, and also that the prisoners were to be admitted to a reasonable ransom, the two parties tied their horses to the opposite extremes of the lists, and having taken their ranks, rushed forward upon each other. At first the strife seemed favourable to the English, for hardly had the two companies closed in combat, when one of the French party was slain.‡

* Lobinau.

† Lobinau declares that the English captains, after arriving at the appointed place, held a parley with the French, for the purpose of postponing the engagement, urging that, in the existence of the truce, such an encounter was likely to call down upon them the anger of both their monarchs. This story, however, is not only unconfirmed, but improbable. I have followed Lobinau's narrative where I have found it borne out by other authorities, but have rejected two or three little absurdities into which he has fallen as a Frenchman, a Breton, and a Benedictine.

‡ Froissart, ad. ye

Some of the comrades of Bambro' were armed with immense mallets and battle-axes; and when, after a long and very severe struggle, the two bands separated, as if by mutual consent, to take breath and refresh themselves, four of the French and only two of the English were found to have fallen.

A considerable pause ensued, while both sides ate and drank, and repaired their armour, till some one, rising, made the signal for renewing the combat, and immediately the struggle recommenced with increased virulence. Beaumanoir knighted one of his younger companions on the field; but still the fortune of the day seemed in favour of the English; and three of the French party were taken. Each individual made exertions almost superhuman; swords and lances, and armour of plate, were shivered like withered twigs; and at the end of several hours, scarcely a man was left unwounded, while all were exhausted with labour and heat. At this time Beaumanoir himself was seen making his way towards a small stream, to quench the burning thirst brought on by wounds and exertion, when one of his companions called him reproachfully back to the field, exclaiming, "Drink thy blood, Beaumanoir! Thy thirst will soon pass!"*

In this exhausted state the French leader was attacked by Bambro' in person, who was in the act of calling to him to surrender, when he was himself hurled to the ground by the blow of a lance in the face, given by Alan de Keranraiz; and before any one could come to the succour of the English captain, Geoffrey du Bois ran his sword through his body, as he lay upon the ground. The death of Bambro' cast the English into confusion; and the three prisoners they had made took advantage of the first surprise to free themselves and join their own party. But still Croquart, a famous brigand of the time, who was fighting on the English side, soon restored order; and though his comrades had suffered severely during their short disarray, he himself, with the famous Hue de Calvarlé, the no less famous Robert Knolles, and one or two others, presented a phalanx which set the Bretons at defiance. At that mo-

* Lobinau, p. 344.

ment, a squire of the French party, named William of Montauban, ran to the farther side of the field, sprang upon his horse, caught his lance, and turned his bridle away from the fight, amidst the reproaches of Beaumanoir, who shouted after him, "Coward! traitor! disgrace to France!"

"Do your part well, Beaumanoir! and fear not I will do mine," replied the squire;* and after having taken ground enough, he turned his horse suddenly, and struck the rowels into his flanks. The animal dashed forward like lightning; and, covered with a complete barde, or coat of steel, the very weight it bore gave effect to its course. It thus overthrew the weary Englishmen against whom it was directed, broke their line, and, being again wheeled upon them in the rear, threw them into inextricable confusion. This well-designed and well-executed manœuvre won the battle; the Bretons poured in upon their enemies in the midst of the disarray occasioned by the passage of Montauban. He on his part took advantage of the confusion which he had created, to beat down all that he could reach; and at length the only four of the English party who could still wield a sword, seeing the day irretrievably lost, yielded to the victors, and were carried prisoners to the Castle of Josselin.† Such was the famous Battle of the Thirty,—a battle which was long the theme of story and of song, and which is still a matter of pride to the good inhabitants of Britanny.‡

Exactly three days afterwards another engagement took place, in which fortune proved far less favourable to the arms of France.§ I have before mentioned that, early in

* Lobinau, p. 315. † Grande Chronique de St. Denis.

‡ Whether the battle were fairly won or not must depend upon the answer given to one simple question, namely, was it or was it not agreed previous to the fight that both parties were to fight on foot?

§ The accounts given by the French chronicles tally well with some papers we find in Rymer. The first state, that on the 1st of April, 1350 (which, Easter falling late in April, was in fact 1351), Guy de Nesle fought with a number of English and Gascons in Saintonge, where he was defeated, and himself and many others taken. The occasion is explained by Froissart, who declares that, early in the year, John prepared to take St. Jean, and guarded the passage of the Charente to prevent any provisions from being introduced; and his statement is confirmed by the letter of Edward

the year 1351, King John showed a strong disposition to break the truce, and, by assembling a very large force on the confines of Gascony, gave Edward just excuse to complain that his territories were menaced in the midst of a formal suspension of hostilities, as if no such engagement to peace had existed. The first news of these movements caused him immediately to reinforce his army in Aquitaine;* and Saintonge being most directly threatened, as the King of France had fixed his head-quarters at Poitiers, it was judged necessary by Lord Beauchamp, Lord James Audley, and others, who now commanded in Bordeaux, to supply the town of St. Jean d'Angely with the means of sustaining a long siege. For this purpose they set out from the Gascon capital, accompanied by five hundred men-at-arms, and fifteen hundred archers, escorting a number of waggons loaded with provisions. Notwithstanding the truce, it was very necessary to reconnoitre every step; and, when they approached the Charente, for the purpose of crossing that river at the bridge below the castle of Taillebourgh, they found the passage guarded by five hundred of the *élite* of the French men-at-arms commanded by the Maréchal de Nesle.†

Lord Beauchamp, being well aware that a handful of men would suffice to defend the bridge against an army, commanded a retreat, and sending back the supplies under the escort of the archers, brought up the rear with his men-at-arms. Amongst the companions of De Nesle were many young nobles, whose very names are intimately con-

to the Archbishop of York, (Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 63), in which he accuses John of breaking the truce and entering the English territories on the continent, with all the armed force that he can collect.

* Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 63.

† 1st April. Barnes, Mezeray, and others, from what sources I do not know, give a very different account of this affair, and place it later in the year. Stow is more accurate in regard to the date, but not in regard to the circumstances. Barnes declares, that De Nesle was defeated by Sir Walter Bentley, but in this he evidently confounds the present battle with one which took place afterwards. The names of the officers and the general particulars (except the date) I have taken from the additional part of Froissart, discovered by Monsieur Dacier; and which is confirmed as an historical document by a number of the state papers.

nected with the history of chivalry; but who, on the present occasion, hurried on by the hot blood of youth, urged their commander to a rash and an unjustifiable act. It is true, the truce had ever been ill observed in Gascony; and the sort of blockade which was kept up before St. Jean d'Angely, was, in fact, a violation of the terms. But no hostile act had absolutely been committed as yet, since the last renewal of the treaty. The French knights, however, hearing that the English were in flight, could not resist their inclination to pursue them. They accordingly crossed the bridge, came up with Lord Beauchamp; and, finding that he instantly wheeled to face them, they charged without further restraint, and at once clove their way through. The English recovered themselves immediately; and after a long struggle the French were completely defeated; the whole, with a very few exceptions, being either killed or taken. Boucicaut, Nesle, Saintré, and a number of other famous knights surrendered, and were carried prisoners to Bordeaux, much to the grief and surprise of the King of France.*

No sooner had the 1st of August arrived, which was the day on which the truce with England expired, than John laid formal siege to St. Jean d'Angely, although his envoys were carrying on negotiations with those of Edward for a further suspension of hostilities. The city was already straitened for provisions; and a more severe scarcity soon obliged the garrison to enter into a convention, by which they stipulated to surrender within fifteen days, if relief was not afforded to them before that time. The English forces in Gascony were in no situation to grant that relief, in the face of a powerful army; and at the end of the term prescribed, the city surrendered to the French monarch.

* The account given by Froissart incorrectly places the capture of Guy de Nesle and the fall of St. Jean d'Angely in immediate connection. It is shown by all the records, that the defeat of the French maréchal took place on the 1st of April, while the surrender of St. Jean took place in September. It is probable that the day on which Froissart places this last event (7th of August) was that on which the regular siege was first undertaken; as it is established beyond a doubt, that the whole proceedings against the place were accomplished between the 1st of August and the 11th of September, when the truce was renewed.

Shortly after the fall of St. Jean d'Angely the King of France, taking for a model the order of the Garter, instituted an order of knighthood, which received the name of the Star.* It is unnecessary here to notice this establishment farther, as before long it fell into disuse; but the very fact of the constant imitation to which all the actions of Edward III. were subject, shows how much he took the lead in the progress of the world during his own day, and proves that he possessed that creative quality of the mind which is perhaps the first attribute of greatness. Even folly can imitate; but genius alone originates.

A cour pleniere, or general meeting of the French nobility at the court of their monarch, took place during the month of October, on the institution of the order of the Star; and amongst others who were called to receive the new mark of distinction were the Lord of Bavilinghen, governor of Guisnes, and Geoffrey de Charny, governor of St. Omer. During their absence from their post, the town and strong castle of Guisnes fell into the hands of the English, notwithstanding the existence of a general truce. Some authorities declare that the fortress was taken by surprise and escalade;† but the more common and best authenticated account states that it was sold to the governor of Calais by the deputy-governor William de Beauconroy, and that his treason having been discovered he forfeited his life upon the scaffold.‡

* The Knights of this order were originally called by John, in his letters patent, "Knights of our Lady of the Noble House." Their garb consisted of a white vest, a surcoat and hood of scarlet, a scarlet mantle furred with miniver, black stockings and gilt shoes. On the shoulder of the mantle and on the clasp of the hood was placed a star, having in the centre an azure circle and a golden sun.

† This account is warranted by the excellent authority of Robert Avesbury, who gives a detailed statement of all the circumstances which led to the fall of Guisnes; and as his general accuracy is beyond all question, it is with much hesitation that I reject his testimony. The two reasons which induce me to do so are, that William of Beauconroy was undoubtedly executed for his treachery (though indeed it might have been for his negligence), and that Avesbury places the capture of Guisnes in January, when it is clearly proved to have taken place in October.

‡ Gd. Chron. de France, part i. chap. iii.

The French monarch remonstrated angrily against the commission of such an act during the suspension of hostilities; but Edward replied gaily that to buy and sell was no infraction of the truce, and that Philip of Valois had set the first example in the case of Calais. Guisnes remained in the hands of the English; but the effect of its capture was an unceasing series of hostilities between the neighbouring garrisons, in which the advantage was ultimately on the side of France. The Lord of Beaujeu and a number of gallant gentlemen were killed, it is true, in pursuing one of the predatory parties of the garrison of Calais; but, on the other hand, before the English could make their escape from the very field in which they had obtained this first success, a French reinforcement arrived, which forced the greater part to lay down their arms, amongst whom were the Lord Beauchamp and twenty of the most celebrated officers of the English army.*

Thus in Picardy and Saintonge success was very equally divided between the two parties. In the first, Guisnes fell into the hands of the English, and yet a number of Edward's best officers were defeated or taken; and in the latter, St. Jean d'Angely was recovered by the French, while a large proportion of John's most famous knights were captured by the adversary. The ransoms of the prisoners, however, were soon paid on either part;† and the year 1351 terminated with more pacific appearances than Europe had presented for a length of time. These signs of a desire for peace were principally, it is true, on the side of Edward; and doubtless were produced by the strong-marked reluctance of his parliament to support him vigorously in a war. But at the same time many of his measures afforded indications of a personal inclination towards peace. David Bruce,‡ the captive King of Scotland, upon giving hostages for his return, was suffered to proceed into Scotland to arrange with his nobles the terms of his ultimate emancipation; and Charles of Blois was first

* Froissart, add. 9.

† The additions to Froissart declare that the Maréchal de Nesle was exchanged for John of Beauchamp, who had been taken in the skirmish in which the Lord of Beaujeu had been killed.

‡ See Rymer, tom. iii. part i. pp. 73, 74, 76, 78.

permitted to reside for some time at Calais, and afterwards was set at liberty on parole, in order to seek a ransom proportioned to his quality and importance.*

While at Calais he was joined by his wife; and some collateral circumstances attending upon the marriage of his daughter, which took place during the period of his stay in France, bade fair to procure the absolute liberation of the captive prince.

After the decapitation of the unfortunate Count of Guisnes, the office of constable, which had been exercised during his imprisonment in England, by Charles of Spain—the brother of Don Louis, whose exploits in Britanny have been mentioned before—remained for some months unfilled, and was at length formally bestowed on the prince, who actually executed the duties thereunto attached. One of the earliest companions of the French monarch, Charles of Spain, now basked in the full sunshine of royal favour; and a few days before he was named to the high office of constable, he received a grant of the county of Angoulême, together with the castles of Benon and Fontenoy; on which last named possessions Charles King of Navarre had, unfortunately, some unsatisfied claim. In addition to these favours John interested himself greatly in the marriage of his friend with the daughter of his cousin Charles of Blois, which took place in the end of this year, or in the beginning of that which followed;† and it is asserted by most of the historians of Britanny, that the King of France undertook, on the completion of the alliance which he had promoted, to pay the ransom of the unfortunate claimant of the duchy of Britanny.‡

* Rymer, tom. iii. part i. pp. 72, 77.

† The marriage of the constable with the daughter of Charles of Blois is placed by Lobinau under the year 1353; but in this he is decidedly in error, as the French historians uniformly place it in 1351, which, as they do not mention the month, might extend to Easter of the following year.

‡ Chron. de St Denis.

CHAPTER VII.

INTERRUPTION OF THE TRUCE.—THE MARECHAL DE NESLE DEFEATED BY SIR WALTER BENTLEY.—CHALLENGE AND PROPOSED DUEL BETWEEN THE DUKE OF BRUNSWICK AND THE DUKE OF LANCASTER.—CHARACTER AND PROCEEDINGS OF CHARLES THE BAD, KING OF NAVARRE.—HE MURDERS CHARLES OF SPAIN, CONSTABLE OF FRANCE.—DISTURBANCES IN ENGLAND.—NEW NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE.—PRELIMINARY MEETING BETWEEN GUISNES AND CALAIS.—FINAL MEETING BEFORE THE POPE AT AVIGNON.—THE NEGOTIATIONS PROVE UNSUCCESSFUL.—THE KING OF NAVARRE LEVIES WAR AGAINST THE KING OF FRANCE IN NORMANDY.—THE DUKE OF LANCASTER SAILS TO AID HIM.—TREATY BETWEEN THE KINGS OF FRANCE AND NAVARRE.—THE BLACK PRINCE SAILS FOR BORDEAUX.—EDWARD III INVADES FRANCE.—KING JOHN ADVANCES TO MEET HIM.—EDWARD PROPOSES A SINGLE COMBAT OR A GENERAL BATTLE.—JOHN DECLINES.—EDWARD RETURNS TO ENGLAND.

In September of the year 1352 the truce with England was about to expire; and John, though probably well aware that it would be ultimately renewed, prepared to take advantage of any interval which might occur in order to establish the party of Charles of Blois more firmly in the duchy of Britanny. For this purpose, without waiting till the truce had absolutely terminated, he despatched the Maréchal de Nesle, now liberated from his imprisonment, to command a considerable French force collected on the frontiers of Britanny; and in the beginning of August, De Nesle entered the province.* This was received as the signal to recommence hostilities by both parties; and an attack was immediately made upon Fougeres by the partisans of Charles of Blois.

Sir Walter Bentley, who had been appointed lieutenant of the King of England in Britanny, after the death of Dagworth,† hastened to guard against the dangers which threatened the party he was sent to uphold; and with extraordinary activity furnished the principal strong places garrisoned for De Montford with the means of undergoing a

* Chron. de St. Denis. † Robert of Avesbury, p. 190.

lengthened siege. The town and castle of Ploermel, which, as De Nesle advanced from the side of Angoumois, were likely to be first attacked, were immediately supplied with provisions; and marching on to Fougeres with large supplies, Sir Walter Bentley not only relieved that town, but took by assault a tower or bastille, which the enemy had built to annoy the garrison. While thus engaged, he received intelligence that the French marshal, without pausing to attack any fortified place, was marching down upon him; and though his own force amounted only to three hundred men-at-arms, and three hundred archers, he immediately advanced to meet the enemy.*

The two armies met in the open fields, near Mauron, a small town and castle between Rennes and Ploermel, and the battle commenced a little after three o'clock on the 14th of August, 1352.†

The numbers of the French army had been increased very greatly since it had entered Britanny, by the junction of the principal adherents of the party of Charles of Blois, so that the conduct of Sir Walter Bentley in attacking such a force seemed little short of madness. The event, however, justified his boldness. The French were broken by the first charge, which was headed by Tannegui de Chatel; and though they prolonged the battle hand to hand for some time, they were totally routed before nightfall. The Maréchal de Nesle himself did not survive his defeat. No person of distinction fell upon the English side; but upon the part of the French the loss amounted to the extraordinary number of eighty knights, five hundred gentlemen of coat armour, and an immense multitude of common soldiers. One hundred and sixty knights and gentlemen were taken; and amongst the dead, or the prisoners, were forty-five leaders, displaying their own banners.

Such a defeat, in all probability, moderated the views of the King of France, and a new truce was soon after concluded. In the mean while, however, took place an act of justice and moderation on his part, which must not be

* Lobinau, p. 345.

† See the original letter of Sir Walter Bentley. The facts are confirmed both by the French and English chronicles.

omitted.* The circumstances from which it proceeded are as follows:—Early in the preceding year the famous Henry Plantagenet, formerly Earl of Derby, but now Duke of Lancaster, seeing that little probability existed of hostilities being soon renewed between France and England, had determined to visit the north, and keep his sword from rusting, by making one campaign against the pagan inhabitants of Lithuania, a sort of domestic holy war, which had greatly superseded in public estimation the more laborious and uncertain expeditions to Palestine. In his passage he completed a negotiation with the Count of Flanders, which tended greatly to overthrow the influence that the court of France possessed with that prince; and it would appear that he had engaged also in a still more delicate transaction, which placed great power in the hands of the English monarch. Margaret, widow of the late Emperor Louis of Bavaria, was, as I have before mentioned, sister to Philippa, Queen of England; but to her, as the elder sister, and to her son as the eldest nephew, of the late Count of Hainault, had descended the whole of the territories of that prince, on his death without offspring. The claims of Philippa had been easily determined; but after the decease of the emperor, some differences had arisen between the empress and her son in regard to the Belgian territories. These differences were willingly submitted by both parties to the arbitration of the King of England; the whole counties of Holland, Zealand, and Friesland were made over in trust to Edward, and the Duke of Lancaster was appointed to conduct the consequent negotiations. Whether he had undertaken other secret missions towards any of the German princes cannot now be discovered; but

* The particulars I am about to relate I have copied principally from Barnes; for though Knighton and Stow, the Chronicles of St. Denis, and all the other sources of information, mention the scattered facts, Barnes seems to have collected and arranged them with the greatest precision. The general account of the chroniclers is borne out by two papers in Rymer, the one containing instructions to the Earl of Lancaster, concerning some negotiations with the Count of Flanders, which show that he visited the north of Europe in 1351; and the second, containing the king's permission to visit France for the purpose of settling his differences with the Duke of Brunswick. (Rymer, tom. iii. part i. pp. 67 and 80.)

it is certain that in higher Germany he was suddenly arrested, by whose command he could not ascertain at the time; and, after having been detained during several days, was only liberated on the payment of a considerable ransom. As he returned towards England, he received intimation that the person who had caused his arrest was Otho Duke of Brunswick, a friend and partisan of the French monarch; and at Cologne the English noble publicly proclaimed his indignation at the duke's conduct, and accused him to the Marquis of Juliers and several other persons, of having detained him for the purpose of delivering him into the hands of the King of France. This charge, as he intended, was carried to the Duke of Brunswick, who instantly sent messengers after him to England, bearing a letter in which he gave him the lie, and dared him to the combat.*

Plantagenet was not a man to slight such a challenge; and it was agreed that the two dukes should meet at the court of France, and settle their dispute in arms. A safe-conduct for the Duke of Lancaster was soon procured from France, Edward's permission was at once granted, and the English peer set out for Paris, accompanied by one earl and sixty other knights, to give splendour to his appearance in the foreign capital. Renown in arms was then, perhaps, the strongest claim upon public respect; and the mighty name which the Duke of Lancaster had acquired procured for him a welcome not inferior to that usually offered to royalty itself. On the frontier of France he was met by one of the French marshals, who conducted him in military state as far as Hesdin, to which place James of Bourbon, one of the princes of the blood royal, had been despatched to do him honour. On his arrival in Paris, King John himself, who had been his personal adversary in Gascony, received him with the highest distinction; and the 4th of September was appointed for the combat. John,

* The words used, by the permission granted by Edward III., are, *Cum ipse ad partes transmarinas, pro se de quibusdam, nequiter sibi per Ducem de Brunswyk, impositis, excusando (si a nobis licentiam optinere valeat) desposuerit in proximo proficisci*, &c.; but the French chronicles state that the two dukes were about to fight *pour paroles* que le dit Duc de Lancastre devoit avoir dites du dit Duc de Brunswick.

however, spared no effort in the mean time to reconcile the two opponents; but the Duke of Lancaster would not withdraw his charge, and the Duke of Brunswick maintained his denial. The lists were erected in a spot generally appointed for judicial combats, called *Le Pré aux Clercs;* and the whole court being assembled, together with a great concourse of spectators, who had flocked from all parts of the country to see two high princes decide their quarrel by arms, the Duke of Lancaster and his adversary entered the field armed at all points, and attended by their esquires and pages. Each took the prescribed oath that their cause was just, and that they bore about their person neither charms nor treacherous weapons; and the Duke of Lancaster assumed his position, received his lance and shield, and erect upon his charger waited the signal to run his course. The Duke of Brunswick, however, was observed to turn pale as he took the oaths, mounted his horse slowly, dropped his shield as it was given to him, and showed that hesitation, which, in a brave man, as he was known to be, argued the consciousness of an unjust cause.

King John immediately interfered; and though the Duke of Lancaster refused to quit the lists till the challenge he received was withdrawn, after much hesitation and debate the duel was avoided. The French monarch now took the decision of the quarrel upon himself; and at length succeeded in bringing about a reconciliation. The Duke of Lancaster left the field with honour; and after having been splendidly entertained by the whole French court, once more returned to England.

While he remained in Paris, however, a friendship is said to have commenced between him and a person distantly related to himself,* to whom contemporary fame has been more than usually just in applying the title of "The Bad." This was Charles King of Navarre, the son of Philip, called the Good and the Wise, and of Joan, daughter of Louis the Tenth, King of France, who con-

* Henry Plantagenet, Duke of Lancaster, was the son of Henry the Wryneck, second son of Edmund Plantagenet, and of Blanche of Navarre, (widow of Henry of Champagne, King of Navarre,) from whom Charles the Bad was directly descended.

veyed to her husband the kingdom of Navarre. His father had died in Spain during the year 1343, and had left his son considerable territories at the foot of the Pyrenees, with other possessions still more valuable, but perhaps less secure, in France. The first transactions with England, in which we find his family involved in any important degree, took place in the year 1348,* when we learn that Edward concluded a treaty of peace with the mother of the Navarrese king, and on some occasion of difficulty, in regard to which I have no information, granted her and her children a refuge in his Gascon territories. Passing thence into Spain, Charles was crowned king of Navarre at Pampeluna, in the following year; but shortly after, returning to France, he began that active course of deceit and vice in which he never paused till a horrible death ended his crimes.

We have seen that, a few months before the death of Philip of Valois, that weak monarch married the sister of the King of Navarre, and Charles himself was affianced shortly afterwards to the daughter of John Duke of Normandy,† who ere long succeeded to the throne of France. This double alliance, it might be supposed, would have attached the young King of Navarre by indissoluble bonds to the house of Valois. So far from it, however, was really the result, that we find him, in the year 1351, treating secretly with Edward, King of England, agreeing to acknowledge that prince as monarch of France, and promising to aid him against all men whatsoever, on condition of receiving the county of Champagne, on which he had some hereditary claim, together with various other districts, to be dismembered from the kingdom he was to assist in obtaining for the English sovereign.‡

* Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 32.

† The daughter of King John was but eight years of age when she espoused the Navarrese prince; and, therefore, though we find that Charles the Bad is even at this time called the son-in-law of the French monarch, we are of course to conclude the simple be, that he was affianced to the daughter of Valois.

‡ Rymer, tom iii. part i. p. 70. His conduct in this affair was rendered the more base by his exercising at that very time the office of lieutenant of Languedoc under the King of France, and affecting to be his most attached friend. See Dom Vaissette, tom. iv. p. 274.

During this transaction he remained at the court of the prince whose confidence he was betraying, praised, admired, and loved by all, his treachery unsuspected, because his character was as yet unknown. Endowed with real talent and corporeal graces, bold, active, clear-sighted, politic, and eloquent, this person displayed the height of manly beauty, his face expressed every fine and noble quality, but his countenance, like his life, was a lie. How it had happened that in his education his mind had never received one moral principle is difficult to comprehend; but certain it is, that virtue seemed to be a thing of which he had no conception; that the gratification of every desire he looked upon as the end and object of life, and that he considered the only true wisdom to be fertility of means and resources, whatever might be their nature or the purposes on which they were employed. He was still in the height of favour and popularity at the court of France, when the Duke of Lancaster visited Paris to fulfil his engagement with the Duke of Brunswick. All was fair and noble in the appearance and manners of the young King of Navarre; and though it is more than probable that Henry Plantagenet was aware of the secret treaty which that prince had opened with his own court, yet there is not the slightest reason for supposing that the duke had taken any part in the negotiation. Charles of Navarre, however, paid devoted court to the Duke of Lancaster during his stay at the French capital. So great was the fascination of his address and eloquence, that even those who had been often deceived by him were continually deceived again. It is not wonderful, therefore, that one who had only seen a single trait of his real character should yield implicit credence to the fair appearances of that prince; and that the Duke of Lancaster should return to England strongly prepossessed in favour of his "fair cousin the King of Navarre."

An occasion soon after presented itself to Charles the Bad for making an open commencement of those crimes which were afterwards to win him a distinguished name amongst the infamous. The extreme partiality of John, the French king, for the companion of his youth, Charles of Spain, had of course occasioned a great deal of envy at

the French court; but the King of Navarre had still more substantial cause of jealousy towards the favourite, John having bestowed upon that nobleman the county of Angoulême and the castles of Benon and Fontenoy, which had been long claimed, and in justice belonged to the house of Navarre. The unhappy constable had too good reason to fear that he had thus become an object of enmity to the son-in-law of the King of France; and he expressed to his royal master his fears of the result.* John assured him of his protection, and treated his apprehensions lightly: the favourite enjoyed higher honours than ever; and in the negotiations for peace which took place in Picardy, during the year 1353, we find that he was one of the principal commissioners on the part of France.† The latter part of that year he spent in Paris; and towards the beginning of January following proceeded to visit the small town of Aigle in Normandy, which he had received as a part of the marriage portion of his young wife, Margaret of Blois. His movements, however, had been watched by the King of Navarre; and setting out from Paris with his brother Philip, Count of Longueville, a relation called Bascon de Marueil, and a large body of attendants, that prince arrived at Aigle during the night. The house in which the constable was sleeping was surrounded; and the assassins, under the leading of Bascon de Marueil, who acted as captain on the occasion, forced their way in, entered the chamber of their victim in the gray of the morning, and slew him before he could offer any serious resistance.‡

Such an act, the King of Navarre well knew, would inevitably draw down upon his head the utmost anger of the French monarch; and he instantly took means to meet that anger by hostility on his own side. Holding a number of strong places in Normandy as Count of Evreux, and heir to the daughter of a king of France, Charles the Bad could at any time introduce the troops of England to the very gates of Paris;§ and knowing his power, he never had the

* Froissart. † Rymer. tom. iii. part i. p. 94.
‡ A. D. 1354. Secousse, Hist. de Charles II.
§ He possessed at that time Caen, Evreux, Mantes, Meulon, Beaumont, and Pontoise.

slightest hesitation in using it, by whatever moral or religious principles its exercise might be opposed. He accordingly provided at once for the security of his principal towns and fortresses; and at the same time opened a new negotiation with the English court.*

In the mean while the King of France had in the first burst of indignation seized a number of the inferior towns of Normandy, which were under the jurisdiction of his son-in-law; but an intimation of the treaty with England, and the fear of confirming such an alliance, induced him to smother his anger, and to treat with the young monarch, who had shut himself up in his town of Evreux. Several of the nobles of Normandy, amongst whom were the powerful lords of Harcourt, had joined the Navarrese prince; and the attitude he assumed was so formidable, that all he asked, apparently, was granted. His communications with the Duke of Lancaster now dropped, 38,000 livres were assigned to him as an annual pension, in compensation for various claims that he made upon the French crown, the death of the unhappy constable was forgiven, and all who had aided in his temporary revolt received a full pardon.

While these events were taking place in France the domestic affairs of England proceeded without any event of great importance. The people, in the tranquillity of peace, began to recover from their weariness of war; and various tumults in different parts of the country announced that repose had brought about that accumulation of animal power which must always have some object whereon to expend itself. The most serious of these disturbances was a rising in Cheshire; and the scarcity which at this time† affected both England and France rendered the distress of the people so great, and their condition so desperate, that active measures of coercion were necessary to suppress

* Rymer, tom. iii. part i. The whole or a great part of the papers relating to this transaction are to be found in the Cotton MS., Caligula, D III. No. 29, article 10. At p. 47, are two of the letters of the King of Navarre to Edward III. and the Duke of Lancaster, written January 18th, 1354, in which he acknowledges and justifies the murder of Charles of Spain.

† Knighton, col. 2606.

general revolt, while other means were employed to relieve absolute want.

The Black Prince, under whose jurisdiction as Earl of Chester the county of Cheshire had been placed, marched directly thither at the head of a considerable force, while the justices in Eyre were sent to take cognisance of the promoters of rebellion.* The tumults were thus soon brought to a conclusion; and some severe fines were levied upon the estates of those who had fomented the spirit of discontent. Affrays of a serious and distressing nature occurred also at Oxford, the colleges were stormed, many of the scholars slain; and, finally, a long interruption of the public studies of the university took place; but these events, originating entirely in private quarrels between the students and the people of the town, but little affected the general peace of the country.

The great councils and the parliaments of course took their tone from the feeling of the nation; and we find an immense number of petitions for the redress of particular grievances, to which, though some of them appear to have been both just and moderate, Edward in almost all instances returned a decided refusal. At the same time, after the year 1351, there was to be remarked a growing tendency to support the monarch in a renewal of the war, while Edward himself professed the strongest desire for peace, and took every means to bring about a final adjustment of his differences with France. The truce was protracted from time to time; and at the last meeting of negotiators between Guisnes and Calais, in 1354,† it was agreed, at the earnest solicitation of the new pope, Innocent VI., who had succeeded to the chair of St. Peter in the end of 1352, that plenipotentiaries should be sent to Avignon to treat under his mediation for a final peace.

It appears that at the preliminary meeting just mentioned the English envoys demanded, and the French conceded,‡

* Barnes.

† 6th April, 1354. Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 95.

‡ Such is the statement of Robert of Avesbury and the great body of our old English writers. I find no such express stipulation in the treaty of truce between Guisnes and Calais, and indeed it could hardly be made an article in that instrument, which

that on the renunciation of all Edward's claims to the throne of France, the whole of Aquitaine should be yielded to him in the extent held by his predecessors, and that it should be free and independent of all homage to the French crown —which homage had occasioned incessant wars; but the renunciation of which in feudal times was a question of deep importance both as a fact and as a precedent.

On the 28th day of August, 1354, the bishops of London and Norwich, the Duke of Lancaster, the Earl of Arundel, and the lords of Burghersh and Laghern,* received powers of the fullest and most unlimited kind from Edward, to treat before the pope, not alone as mediator, but in many instances as arbitrator, concerning the settlement of a firm and secure pacification. The instrument by which this authority was conveyed to them is still extant; and no one can peruse it without the firmest conviction, that whatever were the circumstances which had caused a change in the monarch's feelings, he was now sincerely desirous of peace. The prelates of England, and the barons, by separate letters invested their several procurators with power to confirm the treaty which was expected to result, in so far as the rights of the clergy and nobility of England were affected by the negotiation.†

The cavalcade formed by the English plenipotentiaries and their suite amounted to 200 horse;‡ and adorned with all the splendour of the times, they thus passed through France, and approached Avignon. They were met at some distance by the French envoys, who entered the town in their company; and everything promised a speedy and pacific termination to the long rivalry of Plantagenet and Valois. In the very first conferences, however, it was discovered that the French ambassadors were inclined to

referred solely to the farther suspension of hostilities; but this account is perfectly confirmed by the letter of Edward to the Archbishop of Canterbury, announcing the resumption of the war. (Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 109.)

* Guy Brian, whose distinguished conduct during the combat under the walls of Calais I have already mentioned.

† This is a curious fact, and a precedent of no slight importance as a matter of history. The papers are preserved in Rymer. Amongst the peers is a John Moubray Lord of Brembre.

‡ Barnes, p. 474.

recede from that which the English plenipotentiaries considered the basis of the whole treaty, namely, the concession of Aquitaine to the King of England, unburdened by the homage which rendered it so fertile a subject of discord. The Duke of Bourbon and the Count of Armagnac argued that neither the King of France nor his nobles could, according to their mutual oaths, alienate the great feofs of the crown, nor free any of the high vassals from that homage on which the whole fabric of a feudal government depended.

The English plenipotentiaries replied, that from the obligations of such oaths they might speedily be liberated by the assistance of the pope, before whom they negotiated, who for the sake of peace would undoubtedly absolve them from engagements which, if adhered to, could only produce a renewal of the war. They stated further, that, being there to seek and receive a fitting compensation for the renunciation of their master's rights to the throne of France, they could not consider the mere possession of Aquitaine as any equivalent, in as much as that duchy had ever belonged to the kings of England since the reign of Henry III., who had no claim upon the French crown. Aquitaine was Edward's own, without the concession of the French plenipotentiaries; and the question to be considered now was, what should be given by John as a fit return for the renunciation of the English monarch in regard to France. Even the abandonment by John of the homage he claimed was, the ambassadors urged, but a poor compensation for Edward's resignation of all title to the throne of France; and they stated at the same time their sovereign's full resolve not to do homage for any territories to a man who unjustly withheld from him the whole kingdom. A number of other difficulties now suggested themselves; and the negotiation was ultimately broken off, though it was agreed that the truce, which was about to terminate in April 1355, should be prolonged till the end of June.

While these transactions were taking place, the King of Navarre, who still sought the recovery of the county of Champagne, on which he possessed very important claims, fled to his brother Philip from the court of France, and took

refuge at Avignon,* where it would seem that he conferred with the Duke of Lancaster; and obtained from that nobleman a promise of armed assistance in case of a rupture with King John. It appears, however, that the negotiation between the two was solely conducted on the responsibility of the Duke of Lancaster as a private individual, and not, as we find generally stated, in his capacity of plenipotentiary from England.† The King of Navarre then journeyed on to his own dominions, paused to collect a body of troops, sufficient to render his pretensions formidable, and, taking ship at Bayonne, he visited England, and then proceeded to Cherbourg in the early part of 1355.‡ He had previ-

* Secousse, Mém. de Charles II. tom. ii. p. 49.

† Edward III., in a subsequent letter to the pope, distinctly denies that the King of Navarre did at this time treat with England; and as the letter was perfectly gratuitous on his part, we have every reason to suppose that it contained the truth. But as all historians agree that the Duke of Lancaster did put to sea with a fleet of forty ships, to back the pretensions of the king during the time that he appeared in arms in Normandy, it would appear beyond doubt that the gallant English noble acted upon his own responsibility, as cousin to the King of Navarre, which is farther confirmed by the statements of the old chroniclers, that all the ensigns and pennons of the vessels were ornamented with the arms of the Duke of Lancaster, not those of England. It is shown also by Secousse, and by the papers of which he was ignorant, in the Cotton Collection, Calig. D. III., that long negotiations on this subject had gone on between the duke and the King of Navarre. The statement that Edward was on board the English fleet during the time that it was at sea, which is made by the commentators of Froissart, and the statement of Froissart himself, that in 1355 the king led an army to the coast of Normandy in person, to co-operate with the King of Navarre, are both contradicted by the above-named letter; but it is shown clearly, by all the other papers in Rymer, that Edward was at different ports upon the south and east coast of England during a great part of the summer; and little doubt can exist that he was watching the progress of events in France, in order to take advantage of any favourable circumstance that might arise. At the same time it is to be remarked, that his different letters express the greatest anxiety for the safety of the coast; and it is probable that during this time he busied himself in putting it in a posture of defence against the approaching war.

‡ The King of Navarre had completed his voyage to Normandy before the 17th of July, as the order of that date for preparing ships for the expedition of the Black Prince mentions expressly that the vessels which had borne the King of Navarre and his men were

ously given warning to his cousin the Duke of Lancaster, who had levied forces, and hired ships; and in the beginning of July that nobleman put to sea, doubtless with the connivance, if not by the commands, of the English monarch.* The vessels bore the arms of the duke on their flags and pennons; and their appearance on the coast of Normandy was sufficient to intimate to the King of France that his turbulent son-in-law had not undertaken the recovery of the territories he claimed without securing for himself very powerful support. John on the first signs of revolt on the part of the King of Navarre had seized some of the principal towns which that prince possessed in France; but the formidable aspect he assumed, the approaching renewal of the war with England, the necessity of opposing the immense armament which was already in preparation for Gascony, and the strong appearance of disaffection amongst the most influential of the Norman nobles, induced the French monarch to smother his wrath, and open a negotiation with the Navarrese king. After considerable difficulties, a treaty was concluded by James of Bourbon, Constable of France, and Walter of Brienne, titular Duke of Athens, on the part of the King of France, with the King of Navarre in person, by which everything past was declared to be forgiven; and a variety of concessions were made to satisfy the claims of the young prince. This convention was entered into at Valognes, on the 10th of September; and the news of the transaction shortly after reaching the Duke of Lancaster, he returned to England, and received from Edward the chief command of Britanny.†

In the mean while active warlike preparations continued in England, for an expedition destined to proceed, under the command of the Black Prince, to Aquitaine; and Ed-

to be staid at Southampton, and establishes the fact of his having visited England, as Froissart declares; although M. Secousse and M. Buchon, never having noticed that paper, deny the statement of the chronicler of Hainault.

* Barnes, pp. 478, 479.

† Whether the duke proceeded to assume that command, and then returned to England, is uncertain; for though Froissart states that he was in Britanny when he received the order to invade Normandy, the journal preserved in Robert of Avesbury shows this assertion to be erroneous.

ward III. himself, remembering the advantages which he had obtained in his last campaigns by attacking the territories of his enemy on many points at once, determined to visit Calais in person, and effect a diversion in favour of his son, by invading Picardy and Artois.* He landed at Calais

* It is remarkable that in Rymer we find no mention of this expedition—no memorandum of the king's passage—no notice of his actions in France; while the fact of the invasion itself is placed beyond doubt by the concurring testimony of all contemporary and nearly contemporary writers. Robert of Avesbury (204), Knighton (col. 2610), Walsingham (163), the Chronicles of France and St. Denis, (ad ann. 1355), and Froissart (add. 15, 17), all mention the expedition with more or less detail. At the same time there is a void in the state papers preserved by Rymer, from the 23d of October to the 3d of December, 1355, in which we find no public acts performed by Edward in England, and which allows the exact space required, and at the exact season assigned for his journey to and stay in France. The French and English accounts, however, differ most materially in regard to the particulars of the whole transaction. The English declare that Edward set out from Calais on the 2d of November, and that the French king, terrified at his approach, retreated with precipitation. Edward pursued, they say, beyond Hesdin, and while marching back to Calais, was visited by the Constable de Bourbon, who proposed a general battle. The King of England then offered the terms named above, which being refused, he still waited at Calais several days, expecting the appearance of John, who never came; and at length, pressed by the urgent danger of his Scottish frontier, the English king re-embarked for his native country. The French, as usual, take all the credit to themselves, and declare that John marched to meet the English king at Hesdin, but that Edward retreated at his approach; that their monarch sent to offer Edward battle at Calais, either in the lists or in the field, but that the English king refused, and repassed the seas. Between these contending accounts I have been guided by Froissart, to whose impartiality Monsieur Dacier himself bears honourable testimony. I find, then, that he confirms the testimony of Robert of Avesbury in almost every important point. He states the battle to have been demanded by the English monarch, through the Lord of Boucicault; and that Edward waited even longer than he had promised at Blangis, in hopes of the coming of the King of France. He adds, however, the motives of John for his delay, which the English historians either did not know or concealed; but which were, that but a small part of the force he expected had arrived at Amiens. From his account it appears that John was both surprised and mortified that Edward retreated, having expected that he would march on to besiege Arras. It is to be remembered that Froissart was neither an Englishman nor a Frenchman, but a Hainaulter, and that he received his account

in the beginning of November,* shortly after the Black Prince had sailed for Bordeaux; and with a small body of select troops, marched at once for St. Omer. Finding that city prepared to repel him, he proceeded towards Hesdin, ravaging the whole country as he advanced, and at length laid siege to the castle and town of Blangis. He there received tidings that the King of France having marched as far as Amiens to meet him,† was waiting at that place for reinforcements; and a communication was immediately opened between the two monarchs in regard to a general battle. Edward proposed, as he had before done on several occasions, either that a single combat should take place to terminate the difference between him and his adversary, or that, to spare bloodshed, the kings, with two, three, or four companions, should dispute the crown of France in arms, the vanquished yielding all his claims to the victor. These terms were rejected; and Edward then named for a general battle the Friday or Saturday following; but demanded that some of the French lords should agree to yield themselves his prisoners if their king, on that day, avoided the engagement. This they also refused to do; and Edward then promised to wait a certain number of days for the approach of the King of France.‡ The period, however, elapsed, without the appearance of the French army; and Edward retreated to Calais. John in the mean time had been anxiously expecting those reinforcements which would have enabled him to give battle to the English; and immediately after the retreat of Edward's army, he followed towards Calais; and sought to bring him to an engagement: but by this time Edward had received intelligence that the Scots had made a new irruption into the possessions of England, had taken Berwick, and were besieging Roxburgh Castle. He therefore determined at once to return

of all the transactions up to the battle of Poitiers from the personal friends and attendants of John of Hainault, who was with King John at Amiens on the very occasion of which we speak, and was his chief counsellor upon military affairs at the time. Between the conflicting statements, therefore, of the English and the French Froissart in the present instance is the best authority.

* Robert of Avesbury, p. 204.
† Froissart, add. 17.
‡ Avesbury, p. 204.

to his own dominions, and meet the danger on the spot. Embarking his troops with all speed, he once more sailed for the British shore, vowing, we are told, that he would not sleep more than one night in any town till he had reached Berwick. But in regard to the expedition he now undertook, we must pause for the present, in order to follow the glorious steps of the Black Prince through the magnificent career upon which he had already entered.

CHAPTER VIII.

EXPEDITION OF EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE TO AQUITAINE.—HIS FORCES.—ADVANCES INTO ARMAGNAC.—APPROACHES TOULOUSE.—INACTIVITY OF THE FRENCH COMMANDERS.—STORMING OF MONGESEUR, AVIGNONET, AND CASTELNAUDRY.—GALLANT DEFENCE OF CARCASSONNE.—THE BLACK PRINCE ADVANCES TO NARBONNE. REFUSES TO TREAT WITH THE PAPAL LEGATES.—THE FRENCH COMMANDERS FOLLOW HIM FROM TOULOUSE.—HE TURNS UPON THEM.—SKIRMISH OF CARBONNE.—THE PRINCE PURSUES THE FRENCH TO GIMONT.—SKIRMISH OF GIMONT.—THE ENEMY RETREAT IN THE NIGHT.—HE RETURNS TO BORDEAUX.—WISE DISPOSITIONS FOR THE WINTER, AND THEIR SUCCESS.—PROCEEDINGS IN NORMANDY.—KING JOHN ARRESTS THE KING OF NAVARRE AND HIS FRIENDS AT A BANQUET GIVEN BY THE DAUPHIN.—CAUSES THE COUNT DE HARCOURT TO BE BEHEADED, WITH THREE OTHERS.—THE PRETENCE FOR THIS CONDUCT.—THE REAL CAUSE.—THE DUKE OF LANCASTER LEADS AN ARMY INTO NORMANDY.—PHILIP OF NAVARRE DOES HOMAGE TO EDWARD III. AS KING OF FRANCE.

The preparations which had been made in England for renewing the war were immense; and though it is evident that a very considerable force had been reserved to act under the command of the king and the Earl of Lancaster, in whatever manner accident might render expedient, yet we find that the armament despatched to Gascony was the chief object of all attention. The moment that the plenipotentiaries had returned to England, bearing the news of their unsatisfactory negotiation at Avignon, Edward, as we have seen, had determined upon war; and though the pope zealously laboured to promote peace, and John showed

himself willing to protract the unstable truce from month to month, the King of England had rejected all proposals of the kind, and proceeded to arm with a degree of rapidity which showed that the last day of the suspension of hostilities to which he was bound by treaty would be the last day of tranquillity.

So great was the demand for weapons, and for armour of all kinds, as soon as it was known that the Black Prince was about to lead an army into Gascony, that the armourers raised their prices in the most extravagant degree; and concealed the greater part of the suits which were already prepared, in order to obtain exorbitant sums for those that they suffered to appear.* The king, however, being informed of this system of exaction, took effectual but arbitrary measures to reduce the price of arms; and appointed commissioners to accompany the Lord Mayor and other magistrates, in making general perquisitions through the whole city, for the purpose of discovering what quantity of armour was really to be procured. He then ordered a fair price to be put upon the various articles thus brought to light, allowing so much for the weight of metal, and so much for the workmanship; at which appraisement they were sold to the first purchaser that could be found.

Paternal pride and anxiety are evident in all the commands which the English monarch gave at this time for the equipment both of his gallant son, and of the forces under his command; and a thousand times greater is the degree of care and activity to be seen in all the preparations and directions for the expedition to Gascony, than there is to be found in regard to any of Edward's personal invasions of France. Many of the most celebrated nobles of England were selected to accompany the Black Prince; and we find the names of Audley, Chandos, and Stafford, amongst the first upon the list of warriors, as well as Salisbury, Warwick,† Suffolk, Oxford, and Cobham. Henry Lord Eam of Brabant had been before peculiarly attached to the person of the prince, and we find, that in the year 1350, shortly after he received the order of the Garter, the

* Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 109.
† Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 111.

Black Prince had granted him an annual pension, in return for which that knight promised to accompany him in all warlike expeditions, and to bear arms in his service against any one but his liege sovereign the Duke of Brabant.* A number of other nobles of distinction were added; and from eight hundred to a thousand men-at-arms, with between two and three thousand archers, and large military stores, were embarked on board the vessels collected at various ports on the southern shores of England, to carry the prince to the scene of his future exploits.

At length, in the middle of August,† Edward the Black Prince, having received his commission as Captain-General and deputy for the king in Gascony, set sail for Bordeaux, and reached that port after a short and easy passage. He was there immediately joined by a number of the Gascon lords, vassals of the English crown; and with them, as better informed than any other persons in his army regarding the state of the country, Edward held long and frequent deliberations respecting the plan of his future proceedings.‡ He now found that the Count of Armagnac,§ Lieutenant-General for King John in Languedoc, together with the Count de Foix, the Maréchal de Clermont, and a number of other nobles, occupied the districts of the Higher Garonne with a very large force; and had already committed great ravages on the territories possessed by the English. The prince's determination was instantly taken to march into the county of Armagnac, and to make himself master of the principal towns it contained, both as a matter of retaliation and as a means of drawing the count from the formidable position he occupied near Toulouse. With this

* Barnes, p. 418. † August, 1355.

‡ Acta Edw. Fil. Ed. III., cited by Barnes.

§ I make no mention of the Constable of Bourbon, not because I am ignorant that a number of the best authorities assert that he was in Languedoc at this time, but because the Prince of Wales, in his own letter, descriptive of his march, makes no mention of him till after his return from Narbonne, which must have been in the beginning of December. The constable was clearly in the north of France during the greater part of September, as he was in treaty with the King of Navarre at that time. He could scarcely, therefore, have arrived at Toulouse by the time that Edward set out on his march.

purpose he set out from Bordeaux as soon as the arrival of the Gascon auxiliaries enabled him to face the enemy in the field; and with an army now swelled to the amount of nearly sixty thousand men, he marched boldly forward towards Toulouse, and approached within a league of that city, ravaging as he passed the counties of Juliac, Armagnac, Cominge, and Lille en Jourdain.*

The greater part of the large towns surrendered at his summons, and many more offered considerable sums for immunity, which was in general granted; but all those which did not thus purchase safety and freedom were either burned to the ground, or fortified and garrisoned for England. Although very little resistance seems to have been made, yet it is clear that some cities must have set an example of more patriotic courage, as we find that John, Lord de Lisle, one of the knights of the garter, was killed by a quarrel from a crossbow within three days after the army began its march. The French commanders at Toulouse, however, gave no great proof of activity or of zeal; for though by the best accounts their force exceeded that of the Black Prince by at least one half, they did not make any movement to stop his progress; and during two days he lay within a league of the city walls, without receiving even an offer of battle. Disunion amongst the generals is said to have been the cause of the scandalous neglect which took place; but surely if ever there was an occasion on which the sword of justice ought not to have remained in the scabbard, it was when three celebrated commanders, with a far superior force, suffered an enemy to make a devastating inroad of nearly three months' duration into their country, and, in the midst of their private dissensions, took no efficient step to arrest his progress or to punish his aggression.

After a halt of two days before Toulouse, the Black Prince led forward his forces, passing the streams of the Garonne and the Arriège, almost within sight of the walls of that city. Each day that followed, some town or fortress was taken; but as the English forces proceeded to a greater and a greater distance from their own territories, the system of keeping possession of some of the stronger cities was totally abandoned. All were razed to the ground, with the exception of those that paid a high ransom, and of

those the strength of which set the arms of their assailants at defiance. A more vigorous resistance than he had at first met with presented itself as the prince advanced. A number of towns refused to surrender. Mongiseur* was taken by assault, Avignonet and its castle were stormed immediately afterwards, and Castelnaudry fell in the same manner. Villefranche was also taken; but the capture of Carcassonne proved more difficult, though the town itself was not walled. The burghers had removed their wealth and their families to the castle; but they boldly determined to defend their dwellings; and drawing a multitude of strong chains across the streets, they presented themselves in a close phalanx, armed with bucklers and lances, at every entrance of the town.†

The English knights, however, headed by Sir Sancho, or Eustace d'Ambrecicourt,‡ made their horses leap the barriers, and while they drove back the burghers, the archers and foot followed with ease. Thus the spaces between the different chains were won one after the other, till at length the citizens were pushed in full flight across the river Aude, after a resistance that did them the highest honour.§ The citadel was found to be fortified in such a manner as to leave no hope of taking it without a long and tedious siege, which did not at all accord with the plans of the Black Prince; and accordingly, after having witnessed the complete destruction of the town, he marched on for Narbonne. As he passed beneath the walls of the castle of Carcassonne, however, he was saluted by a discharge of cannon from the battlements, which slew a considerable number of his troops, but he pursued his way without being tempted to seek a revenge, which might not have been obtained; and soon after reached Narbonne, having granted terms of composition to the intervening cities.

* So written in all the old manuscripts, but undoubtedly the place now called Montgiscard, on the Canal de Languedoc, is meant.

† Froissart, add. xix.

‡ I find this knight called by both names, and it would seem that the actions of the d'Ambrecicourt, knight of the garter, are often confounded with those of another of the same surname.

§ Wingfield, who was present, says, "Et prist la ville de Carcasoun, q'est plus graunt, plus fort et plus beale qe Euerwick."

The town of Narbonne was also taken by assault, but the castle held out; and while Edward paused before it, a sergeant-at-arms presented himself, bearing messages from two papal legates, who had advanced within a few leagues of the camp, and who now demanded letters of safe-conduct to approach the person of the prince. Their object was still to promote pacification; but though the Black Prince had full powers from his father to conclude upon war or peace, important tidings which he had lately received from two quarters induced him to refuse to treat, and to refer the legates to the king. The first intelligence was, that his father had landed in the north, which he justly imagined must affect the power granted to himself.* The second imported that the French had issued forth from Toulouse, and were pursuing him towards Narbonne; and the prince naturally concluded that, if he listened to overtures of truce under such circumstances, the enemy would suppose he had embarrassed himself by advancing too far, and would gain confidence from the very rumour.

He consequently sent back the serjeant-at-arms, refusing, in respectful language, to receive the legates; and then immediately turned upon the enemy, who were now within a few days' march. He had at this time proceeded without interruption from the shores of the Bay of Biscay nearly to the Mediterranean; and had more severely injured the King of France by one campaign than any of the preceding governors of Aquitaine had done in the whole period of their command. But, carried on by the ardour of genius and high courage, and confident in the resources and powers which he felt within his own breast, by plunging into the heart of the enemies' country, and leaving behind him, without a fear or precaution, an army considerably superior to his own, he had certainly committed one of those acts which would be rash were they not eminently successful.

No sooner did the French generals hear that he had wheeled upon them, than they began their retreat towards Toulouse, the walls of which they reached before the prince could come up with them. He now once more passed be-

* See Letters of Edward the Black Prince, and of Wingfield, in Robert of Avesbury.

fore that city, and crossing the Garonne at Carbonne, some leagues above it, encamped for a day on the other side of the river. At midnight he was awakened by the intelligence that the French army with the Count of Armagnac, the Prince of Orange, the Constable James of Bourbon, and the Maréchal de Clermont, had again issued forth in force from Toulouse, and that the main body was within two leagues of his rear-guard, a part of whose baggage had been carried off by the light troops of the enemy. Instantly mounting on horseback, the prince despatched the lords of Burghersh, Chandos, and Audley, together with Baldwin Batour, Thomas Felton, and thirty lances, to reconnoitre the adverse force, while he himself followed at the head of the English army. Lord Burghersh and his party advanced as rapidly as possible, and soon fell in with one of the French outposts, consisting of two hundred men. The enemy, suddenly attacked by the English knights, fled after a short struggle; and, leaving thirty of their number in the hands of the assailants, carried the news of the approach of the prince and his forces to the adverse army. The panic which possessed the outpost spread itself to the main body, and the whole retreated in disorder across the river Save towards Sauveterre and Lombers, destroying the bridges behind them.

The Black Prince in the mean while advanced with the utmost rapidity, but was obliged to halt on the banks of the Save, to ford which, in the darkness of the night, and in a strange country, was totally impossible. He had thus the mortification of finding himself so near his adversaries, that their fires were distinctly visible during the whole night, without any means of reaching their camp. On the following morning the bridges were rapidly reconstructed; and pursuing the enemy's forces without a moment's loss, he came up with their rear as they were entering Gimont, and great slaughter took place. The whole of that night he lay before the town, which was strongly fortified, and the next morning, at dawn, drew out his men in array, and waited in the field, hoping that the French would come forth and give him battle. He soon found, however, that during the night a part of the adverse force had been withdrawn from the city by the opposite gates, while the leaders

and the troops that remained were sufficient to hold out the place for an indefinite period; and he therefore at once determined to march on towards Bordeaux. No further interruption was offered to his progress, and before Christmas he had arrived in safety at the Gascon capital, after one of the most daring and most successful expeditions recorded in history.

Although the winter is frequently very severe in that part of France, and the season prevented his keeping his whole army in the open field, the Black Prince lost no time in inactivity. Dividing his forces into several bodies, while he himself marched forward to Libourne, he detached his principal leaders towards the most accessible points upon the enemies' frontier, by which means the opportunity of pursuing the war upon a minor scale was afforded to them, while the castles and cities of the English border gave them a certain refuge against any superior force of the adversary, and also against the inclemency of the winter. The Lords John Chandos, James Audley, Reginald Cobham, and others, marched upon Barsac, Castel Sacrat, and the Agenois. The Captal de Buch, the Lord of Montferrand, the Lord of Crotoin, and Bartholomew Lord Burghersh, were despatched toward Anjou and Poitou; while the Earls of Suffolk, Oxford, and Salisbury, with the Gascon Lords of Muciden and Pomiers, and five hundred lances, were commanded to advance towards Notre Dame de Roquemadour. By this judicious employment of his troops during the winter, the Black Prince had the satisfaction of seeing five fortified towns and seventeen castles added to the English possessions in less than one month; and it appears that nothing but the season of the year prevented him from leading his forces reunited to some still more important enterprise.

In the mean time the violent passions of the King of France had been preparing for the Black Prince the same collateral advantages which the intemperance of his father had afforded to Edward III. in the preceding wars between France and England. Early in the year 1355 John had given the vacant duchy of Normandy to his eldest son Charles, who, by the cession of Hombert of Auvergne, had

become Dauphin of Viennois. The Dauphin* was then a youth of eighteen years of age, and after rendering homage for his new territories, he hastened to take possession of the duchy, setting out with the wise purpose of conciliating the regard not only of the vassals placed under his sway, but of the neighbouring lords who held directly of his father.

Shortly after his arrival, however, the renewal of the gabelle,† or tax upon salt, threw the whole of France into commotion; and in Normandy, especially, the discontent of the people engendered a spirit of resistance, not only amongst the populace, but amongst the nobles also; and disunion and want of confidence were extended through the whole duchy.

One of the families which most strongly resisted the odious measure was that of Harcourt,‡ whose immense possessions and great popularity rendered their example of infinite consequence. Through the whole territories of the count the gabelle was strenuously resisted, and the burghers of Rouen followed his steps, as did also his brothers, and his uncle, the famous Godfrey of Harcourt,

* Charles Duke of Normandy, the first of the French heirs apparent who took the title of dauphin, was born on the 21st January, 1337.

† This tax had been often before attempted, but had ever produced the most extreme discontent, which frequently proceeded to revolt. On the present occasion, however, its exaction was justified, if ever it was so, as it was one of the principal imposts voted by the three states of the kingdom, in return for a number of concessions made by John. No impost, however, could be more impolitic, not only because it affected one of the necessaries of life, which is contrary to every principle of common sense, without considering political economy; but also because it had been already rendered odious to the people, and because it implied the infraction of many feudal privileges in its collection, which was sure to raise up against it the opposition of the nobles.

‡ I am not certain whether the renewal of the gabelle had any thing to do with the share which the family of Harcourt had taken in the late expedition of the King of Navarre. I am inclined, however, to think that it had not, as I do not find it expressed in the treaty which ended the insurrection caused by that prince, in September, 1355. It is probable, therefore, that the Harcourts had some other grievances, to which the infliction of the gabelle was but an addition.

whose exile had proved so destructive to France, and whose return had been conceded by the truces lately granted. Neither would the King of Navarre, though now at peace with his father-in-law King John, permit the gabelle to be levied in the territories which he possessed in Normandy; and the resistance was so general, that the application of force was likely to prove vain, especially at a moment when France was threatened on every side by invading armies.

The young duke did all that he could to soothe; and early in 1356 he invited the King of Navarre, his brother Philip of Navarre, the Count of Harcourt, Godfrey of Harcourt, his uncle, and a number of other noblemen, to a splendid entertainment in the castle of Rouen. Although there is no absolute proof that the Dauphin was in any degree accessory to the events which took place at this festival, it is evident that the more wary of the adverse party suspected from the first some treachery; and Philip the King of Navarre's brother, as well as Godfrey of Harcourt, not only declined the invitation of the duke, but strongly urged their relations to avoid placing themselves in the power of the princes they had offended.

The others would not be warned, and on the day appointed repaired to Rouen, and were received by the Dauphin with every appearance of frank hospitality. Dinner was served in the hall of the castle, and festivity and joy alone reigned amongst the guests, when suddenly the door was thrown open, and King John appeared with fury in his countenance. He was preceded by one of his marshals, Arnold of Audenam, bearing a drawn sword, and was followed by his guard of sergeants-at-arms. The marshal immediately proclaimed, "Let no one stir from his place, whatever he may see or hear, if he would not die by this sword;" and the French monarch, advancing to the head of the table, approached the King of Navarre.

Though at first all had sat still through astonishment, the whole party now rose to do honour to their sovereign; but that monarch, catching the King of Navarre by the shoulder, dragged him furiously towards him, exclaiming, "Out traitor! You are little fit to sit at the table of my

son! By the soul of my father, I have a mind never to eat or drink while you are in life."

The King of Navarre's squire, Colin du Blet, or du Blesville, on seeing his master so assailed, sprang forward, and, drawing his dagger, held it to the bosom of the King of France, declaring he would slay him if he did not unhand his lord. John quitted his grasp and drew back, but the King of Navarre and his gallant squire were both seized by the serjeant-at-arms; and the French monarch then commanded the apprehension of all the other persons present, except the Dauphin and his immediate attendants.

In vain the young prince cast himself upon his knees, and besought his father, for his honour and fair repute, to spare him the disgrace which would inevitably fall upon his name by the arrest of such a number of noble gentlemen at his very table. In vain he represented, that all men would believe he had inveigled them most treacherously to their fate, under the semblance of hospitality. John was not only inexorable, but either felt or affected fury on account of an alleged discovery of treasonable papers, by which the King of Navarre, the Lords of Harcourt, and the rest of the persons present, were proved to have leagued themselves with his bitter enemy the King of England. All he vouchsafed to reply to the entreaties of his son was, "Peace! peace, Charles! They are vile traitors, and their deeds shall soon be made manifest. You know not all I know!" At the same moment, snatching a mace from one of the sergeants-at-arms, he struck the Count de Harcourt a violent blow, as he was being led away, exclaiming, "On! proud traitor! Get thee to prison."

After this indecent scene, the French monarch dined; and then ordered out four of the prisoners for execution, namely, the Count de Harcourt, the Lord of Guerarville or Graville, the Lord of Mainesmar or Maisnan, and the unhappy squire who had rendered himself obnoxious by his bold but noble defence of his lord. Without giving them time even to confess,* these unfortunate men were carried

* The squire was allowed to fulfil the duties of his religion, as an act of especial grace.

out in carts to a field behind the castle, called the field of pardon; and John, having mounted his horse, witnessed in person the formal murder of his turbulent subjects.*

The King of Navarre and the rest of his companions were then carried as prisoners to Paris, and confined in the Louvre; and John, to justify the extreme measures he had taken, declared that he had discovered a treasonable correspondence between the house of Navarre and the King of England. The necessity of some new pretence for severity was evident, as the French king had but very lately entered into a solemn treaty with the Navarrese prince, and had granted him full letters of pardon for all past offences. But there is reason to believe that the true cause of the rancorous violence of John's behaviour was one which both policy and paternal affection forbade him to make public. It appears beyond doubt that Charles the Bad had contrived to seduce the inexperienced Dauphin into a plot against the authority of the king, and had engaged him to fly to the court of the emperor, in order to await there an opportunity of attacking his father, and taking possession of the crown. The prince, it would seem, had speedily atoned for listening to such counsel by revealing his fault to his sovereign and parent; and John did not choose either to expose the dissensions in his family, or to publish the errors of his son. He therefore proclaimed aloud, that he had detected a conspiracy between his subjects and the King of England, and thus at once shielded the reputation of the Dauphin, while he assigned a cause for his severity to the others that was sure to appear in a favourable light to the eyes of national prejudice.†

The falsehood was instantly exposed, however, by Edward III.; and the injustice which was committed—for condemnation without trial is in itself unjust—was resented by the relations of the injured nobles with indignation, which led them to the same detrimental course that had

* Froissart, add. 20. Chroniques de France.

† Whether the Dauphin was or was not really accessary to the arrest of his guests at his own table must ever remain in doubt; but the hypocrisy of his whole life still warrants a suspicion.

already been pursued by more than one of the French malcontents. Edward addressed a public letter to the pope, denying in the strongest manner the truth of the charges brought by the French monarch against the King of Navarre and the Norman lords; and plighting, on the truth of his asseveration, his faith as a Christian and his honour as a knight. Philip of Navarre and Godfrey of Harcourt, with a number of other nobles, sent their formal defiance to John;* and the two chiefs, after having as far as possible provided for the security of the towns and castles which they held in Normandy, despatched messengers to England,† and promised to do homage to Edward III. as rightful King of France, upon condition of receiving armed assistance.

This promise they afterwards fully kept;‡ and Edward commanded the Duke of Lancaster, with the young John of Montford, 500 men-at-arms, and 800 archers, to take advantage of the opportunity thus afforded of penetrating into Normandy. Immediately after his landing in the peninsula of Cotentin, the duke was joined by Philip of Navarre and Godfrey of Harcourt, with 100 men-at-arms; and, according to previous orders, the famous Robert Knolles, with 300 men-at-arms and 500 archers, marched from Britanny, and effected his junction with the invading force.§

It would be tedious to trace all the petty sieges and minute events of the twenty-five days that followed. The duke began his march from Montebourg on the 22d of June, 1356; and, advancing at once upon Pont Audemer, a city belonging to the King of Navarre, he forced the French forces which were at this time besieging it to raise the siege, leaving behind them all their artillery and implements of war. Conches and Verneuil were taken; Bre-

* Froissart, add. 21.

† Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 122.

‡ Robert of Avesbury.

§ Froissart declares that the Duke of Lancaster was in Britanny at the time of the application made by Philip of Navarre to the King of England for assistance, but this seems contradicted by the journal in old French preserved in Robert of Avesbury.

teuil was reinforced; and the detached bodies of men, which by command of King John were striving to make themselves masters of all the territories of the Navarrese princes in Normandy, abandoned the attempt at the approach of the English army, and, retreating towards the Seine, concentrated themselves upon Pontoise and Mantes. King John himself advanced in haste to oppose the forces of his enemies; and as he had previously made preparation for the complete reduction of Normandy, he was soon at the head of an army infinitely superior in number to that of the Duke of Lancaster. By this time, however, the English commander had accomplished the great purpose of his expedition, namely, the relief of all those places belonging to the party of Navarre, which had been besieged before they could be sufficiently provisioned. He had also put a number of others in a defensible state; and the immense host by which he was menaced, amounting already to 40,000 men, rendered farther advance more than inexpedient. His retreat was therefore commenced at once; but the French monarch, following as rapidly as possible, came up with him in the neighbourhood of L'Aigle, and sent two heralds to demand battle.* The duke replied vaguely; and as it wanted but a few hours of night, the two armies, after remaining for some hours in battle array, retired to their quarters.

To fight in the open field with 900 men-at-arms and 1400 archers, against more than 10,000† of the French chivalry, supported by 30,000 crossbow-men and other foot soldiers, was an act not to be justified by anything but absolute necessity. The Duke of Lancaster, therefore, decamped in the middle of the night, leaving a body of light cavalry on the spot, who, by disposing themselves behind a hedge, which partly concealed partly displayed their line, contrived to deceive the French monarch, and led him to believe that the whole army still occupied its ground.‡ This delusion continued till late in the morning,

* Robert of Avesbury.

† Froissart, add. 21.

‡ Such is the account given by Froissart; and even had it been

when the English horsemen galloped off; and King John discovered that the duke himself, with almost the whole of his forces, must have gained upon him between fourteen and fifteen leagues of march.

Farther pursuit he perceived would be vain; and, by the large army which he had at his disposal, he doubted not he should soon be able to regain all that had been lost by the invasion of the English. While the French monarch now turned his arms against Evreux, the capital of the King of Navarre's territories in Normandy, the Duke of Lancaster retrod his steps to Cotentin; and on the 17th of July, in passing by St. Sauveur le Vicomte, he once more received, on behalf of the King of England, the homage of Godfrey of Harcourt.*

Philip of Navarre himself shortly after crossed the sea to England, and likewise did homage to the English monarch in person, as rightful King of France, in return for which Edward granted him 60,000 crowns per annum, to be levied on lands in Normandy which yet remained unconquered. One collateral circumstance connected with this act of homage is too remarkable to be passed over in silence. It is the curious fact, that the claim of the princes of Navarre to the French crown was nearer than that of Edward himself, and that, if the only condition under which the English monarch's title could be made good, were once admitted, the King of Navarre was King of France, and Edward was excluded. Edward was the grandson of Philip the Fair by his daughter Isabella; but the princes of Navarre were grandchildren of Louis Hutin, the eldest son

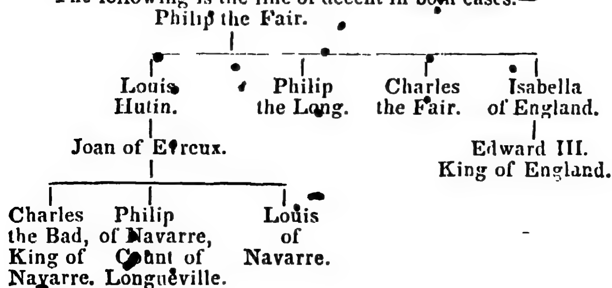
absolutely irreconcilable with the statement of Robert of Avesbury, I should have felt strongly inclined to adopt it, as highly probable, from the relative numbers of the two armies. But as Robert of Avesbury, or rather the anonymous writer of the journal of the Duke of Lancaster's expedition, states that the two armies did meet near L'Aigle, and leaves the matter very doubtful as to how they separated, the account of Froissart may be received as supplying the deficiency, especially where probability is on the side of the chronicler.

* Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 124.

of that sovereign.* If, therefore, the male children of a female descendant could succeed to the rights which she would have inherited had she been a male, the claim of the King of Navarre to the French throne was better than that of the King of England, inasmuch as he was the heir of a later king. Why this objection was never urged against the pretensions of the English king, or why it was so faintly urged as to have escaped the observation of after ages, is difficult to conceive: but certain it is that Philip of Navarre did homage to Edward as legitimate monarch of France, and aided him strenuously in his endeavours to conquer a kingdom unto which the house of Evreux had a right decidedly prior to that of the family of Plantagenet.

John, in the mean while, pursued fiercely and imprudently the war which he had kindled against himself in Normandy by the arrest of the King of Navarre, and the execution of several nobles without trial. It is true that he met with considerable success, and that Evreux, the chief city belonging to the turbulent prince whom he detained a prisoner, surrendered after a short siege. The town and castle of Breteuil, however, held out more vigorously; and an immense movable tower, which was brought against the walls, was destroyed by the united effect of cannon and of Greek fire.† At length, however, news arrived at the camp of the French monarch, of a kind which might well have shown him the imprudence of the conduct he was pursuing, in leaving the rich countries of Berry, Saintonge, and

* The following is the line of decent in both cases:—



† Froissart, add. 21.

Perigord open to the arms of the English, while he was carrying on a petty warfare against a revolted vassal in Normandy. He nevertheless still remained before Breteuil for several days, till the garrison, seeing no prospect of relief, yielded upon advantageous terms. The French king then turned his attention towards Aquitaine; and a slight view of the events which had lately occurred in the south will show that the most energetic exertion on the part of the monarch had long been demanded in that quarter of his dominions.*

* As a good deal of confusion has obscured these events, and I have had great difficulty in disentangling them, it may be as well to subjoin a statement of the chronological order in which, as far as I can discover, the principal facts stated in the last two chapters did really occur.

14th August, 1352. Battle of Mauron and defeat of Marshal de Nesle.
1352. Truce renewed.
" 1353. Preliminary negotiations for peace.
January, 1354. Murder of Charles of Spain by the King of Navarre.
28th August, 1354. Plenipotentiaries sent from England to treat for peace at Avignon.
June, 1355. The truce terminates.
July, 1355. The King of Navarre leads an army against France.
July, 1355. The Duke of Lancaster sails to support him.
August, 1355. The Black Prince leads an army to Aquitaine.
September, 1355. The King of Navarre concludes a treaty with King John at Valognes.
November, 1355. Edward III. lands at Calais and invades France.
December, 1355. Edward III. returns to England.
December, 1355. Edward the Black Prince, after having led his army triumphantly from the Bay of Biscay to the Mediterranean, returns to Bordeaux.
Spring, 1356. The King of Navarre and his friends arrested at a banquet, and the Count of Harcourt with three others beheaded.
22d June, 1356. The Duke of Lancaster marches into Normandy to aid the friends of the King of Navarre.
17th July. Returns to Cotentin.

CHAPTER IX.

EXPEDITION OF EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE INTO AUVERGNE, BERRY, AND POITOU. —MEASURES OF KING JOHN TO INTERCEPT HIM.—BATTLE OF POITIERS.

The plan which had been laid out, after the Prince of Wales returned from Languedoc, for extending the English pale on every side, with little risk and expense either of money or men, had proved so successful, that it encouraged the young commander to proceed upon the same cautious principles; and during the whole of the winter of 1355-6, though very great advantages were gained by England, yet nothing occurred to indicate the daring and energetic spirit of the Black Prince. His officers, however, continued their exertions in the various parts of the province, towards which they had been detached. The Captal de Buch* advanced rapidly towards Perigueux; and the Count of Perigord, finding himself unable to offer effectual resistance, sent messengers to negotiate with Edward in person. The conduct which the English had pursued in Languedoc led him to believe that he might be permitted to purchase immunity for his territories by the payment of a sum of money, and he consequently offered a ransom fully proportioned to the value of his county. But the circumstances of Perigord were very different from those of the Narbonnaise. The count's territory formed part of the original duchy of Aquitaine: whatever doubt might exist in regard to Edward's claim upon France, his right to Aquitaine was more distinctly established; and the Black Prince positively refused all terms of compromise. "His father," he replied, "had enough of gold and silver; and therefore desired no more. But for his own part," he added, "he had resolved never to sheath the sword so long as one town in Aquitaine remained unconquered." The Captal was im-

* Robert of Avesbury, p. 238.

mediately ordered to march forward, and Perigueux soon after surrendered to his forces. Mirambau, between Blaize and Vainctes, was taken by the Earl of Warwick; and in the course of the month of April an immense number of the neighbouring nobles of Aquitaine, either alarmed by the progress of the English arms, or disgusted with the negligence of the French government, declared their formal adhesion to England, and yielded their towns to the Black Prince.*

More active operations were soon commenced by the young commander; and as soon as the intelligence reached him that the Duke of Lancaster was advancing into the heart of Normandy, he determined upon resuming that bold energy which had distinguished his first campaign, hoping both to effect a powerful diversion in favour of his gallant cousin, and to reap substantial benefits on his own part, in those provinces towards which he was about to lead his troops.

Languedoc, and the parts of Gascony which adhered to the house of Valois, had been placed in a state of preparation sufficient to make aggression in that quarter dangerous; but King John, with unaccountable negligence, had not only omitted to direct his chief personal efforts to the point where the greatest danger lay, but had left some of his richest provinces exposed to the attack of an enemy. Berry and Auvergne, the Limousin and the Bourbonnois, seem to have been trusted entirely to what troops the nobles of those provinces could raise; and the Black Prince, leaving the principal part of his forces, under the command of the Lord of Albret, to guard the territory already acquired against the French army led by the Count of Armagnac, proceeded himself, with 2000 select men at arms and 6000 archers, to ravage the territory of Rouergue.† He then advanced rapidly into Auvergne; and crossing the Allier, laid the whole country through which he passed under contribution, till fearful, apparently, of entangling himself amongst the mountains, he turned toward the west, and passing through a part of the Limousin and Lamarche, entered Berry and marched up to the very gates of Bourges,

* Robert of Avesbury, p. 227. † Froissart, add. 22.

By this time, however, the French monarch had become aware of the danger of his provinces, and was taking active measures to meet it. As the first step, he had despatched various detachments to reinforce the feudal garrisons of the different towns and castles in those parts of the kingdom immediately menaced with attack; and having issued a general order for his vassals to meet him in arms upon the banks of the Loire, he himself advanced to Chartres, and waited the effect which such a call never failed to produce throughout France.

The suburbs of Bourges were burned to the ground by the English army, but the archbishop, who was within the town, together with two officers who had been despatched to his aid by the king, showed themselves so well prepared to resist, that, after skirmishing for some time at the barriers, Edward abandoned the hope of winning the place, and detached a part of his forces against Issoudun.* In this attempt also he was unsuccessful; and, as intelligence reached him continually of forces assembling from every quarter to oppose his progress, or cut off his retreat, he determined upon leading his forces slowly back towards Guyenne, gaining what advantages he could in his progress. His march bore not the slightest appearance of flight; and, after having taken Vierzon by storm, he proceeded towards Romorentin, leading his troops forward in such close order, that the parties of the enemy which now began to hover round him found no opportunity of even annoying him in his retreat. The only occasion on which we find any of his forces even in danger, was on his approach to Romorentin, when Sir Neel Loring, Lord Burg-

* Almost all the accounts of this famous march declare that Edward attacked Issoudun in person; but it is hardly possible to conceive that such was the case, if one considers for a moment the geographical position of Bourges, Issoudun, and Vierzon. Vierzon lies in a direct line between Bourges and Romorentin, at the siege of which there is no doubt the prince commanded in person; but Issoudun lies twenty miles to the south-west of the direction which he took, and is situated in a country intersected with rivers, from which he would have had great difficulty in extricating himself. To suppose that he went to Issoudun would be to believe that he marched back towards Guyenne, and then suddenly retrod his steps to attack Vierzon and Romorentin.

hersh, and some other English and Gascon knights, with 200 men at arms, had nearly been taken in an ambush laid by the Lords of Craon and Boucicault, and by a leader named the Hermit of Chaumont. Edward's knights, however, defended themselves so vigorously, that with inferior forces they maintained the combat till the advanced guard of the English army arrived; and the French were completely routed. The three leaders threw themselves into the citadel of Romorentin, the town attached to which was soon after taken by the Prince of Wales. Edward then despatched Chandos to summon the castle to surrender, offering favourable terms, which were refused with all chivalrous courtesy, and the assault of the castle itself was instantly commenced.*

The resistance was as gallant as might be expected, and the young brother of Lord d'Albret was killed by the side of the Black Prince, who, in the first bitterness of grief for his loss, swore that he would never quit his ground till he held the citadel and all within it at his pleasure. The use of the famous Greek fire seems then to have been common in both the armies of France and England; and Edward, by casting immense quantities of that fearful compound over the walls of the citadel, soon forced the garrison to surrender at discretion. He received the knights, however, with all kindness; and leaving the fortress a pile of ruins, marched on towards Poitiers.†

* Monsieur de Châteaubriand, in a work which he has lately published on the history of France, full of eloquence and brilliancy, and wanting nothing but accuracy and harmony, says that the siege of Romorentin was the first at which cannon were employed. They had been employed in the defence of places besieged many hundred times before, and were used at Breteuil, and in the former year had been directed against the Prince of Wales himself by the garrison of the castle of Carcassonne. He says also, that the Black Prince went to join the Duke of Lancaster in Le Perche. Such, however, could hardly be the case; for by the time that Edward turned from Bourges—which certainly was not his way towards Normandy—towards Romorentin—which was—the Duke of Lancaster had quitted Le Perche nearly two months; the taking of Romorentin having occurred on the 4th of September, and the Duke of Lancaster having returned to Montbourgh, in Cotentin, on the 16th of July preceding.

† It has been insinuated, without the slightest shadow of reason,

In the mean time King John advanced from Chartres to Loches, which he again quitted on the 13th of September, and hastened forward to intercept or overtake the Prince of Wales before he could make good his retreat into Guyenne. The French monarch had now, indeed, forces fully sufficient to overwhelm the little army which the Black Prince had led into the heart of his territories. He was accompanied by his four sons, 140 bannerets, and 20,000 men-at-arms, besides an immense force of infantry. From Loches, John advanced towards Poitiers, crossing the river Creuse at La Haye; and then, marching on in two columns, passed the Vienne at Châtelleraut and Chauvigny, believing the army of the prince to be in advance. Such, however, was not the case; and the rapidity of the French monarch's march from Loches, which had in all probability interrupted his knowledge of his enemy's movements, had also placed him, by the 17th of September, between the Black Prince and Guyenne.

In the mean while the prince pursued his way, in ignorance of the precise position of the French king, although he was well aware that John was making every effort to cut off his retreat; and although the enemy's parties, which were spread over the country in all directions, together with the increasing want of forage, must have shown him that the adverse army was not far distant. It happened by a singular accident, that, during the last two or three days' march, Edward pursued precisely the same line which had been followed by the enemy, and directed his course at once upon Poitiers.* Between Chauvigny and the

that Edward in this expedition showed a merciless and savage disposition. On the contrary, compared with that of any other commander, his conduct was clement and mild beyond all example. The above fact—the sparing of a large body forced to surrender at discretion, and treating with kindness and courtesy, is one instance out of thousands; nor can it be proved that he refused fair terms of capitulation to any city till after his return from Spain.

* Monsieur de Châteaubriand declares that the Black Prince turned aside to avoid Poitiers; but the fact is the direct contrary; at least, if contemporary authority may be credited in preference to modern speculations. Froissart declares that Edward was between Chauvigny and Poitiers—and Robert of Avesbury, *in viâ ducente de Chaveny versus Peyters*—when this skirmish took place. R. Avesbury, p. 255.

capital of Poitou, a small foraging party from the English forces fell in with about 300 French horse, under the command of the Counts of Auxerre and Joigny, the Marshal of Burgundy, Raoul de Coucy, and the Lord of Chatillon, who were following leisurely the royal army towards Poitiers. The French lords at once pursued the handful of English across some bushes, which separated them from the rest of the English forces; and before they were aware, De Coucy and his companions found themselves under the banner of the Black Prince. Although resistance was hopeless, the French knights held it a point of honour not to yield without striking a blow, and thus several men were slain before they surrendered. The rest of the party were at length made prisoners, and from them Edward first learned that the King of France was a day's march in advance.

That he must either fight or yield, now became clear to the Black Prince; and he immediately despatched the Captal de Buch, Lord Burghersh, and some other knights, with 200 men-at-arms, to reconnoitre the force and position of the enemy, though the report of his prisoners showed such a fearful superiority of numbers on the part of King John that the chances of battle seemed utterly hopeless. The captal and his companions came up with the rear of the French army, just as the king was marching into Poitiers, and with very imprudent daring they dashed in amongst the last troops, overthrew some men-at-arms, and took some prisoners. The report of their attack soon reached the King of France; and he thus learned for the first time that the enemy he was so eagerly striving to encounter was in fact two leagues behind him. His purpose of entering Poitiers was immediately abandoned, and, ordering an instant halt, he encamped for the night without the walls of the town.

The Captal de Buch and his companions retired unscathed from their daring attempt, and brought to Edward the intelligence, that far more than eight times the number of his own forces lay in hostile array between him and Poitiers.* The prince felt all the difficulties of his situa-

* The numbers of the French army on this occasion are very

tion fully, but he felt no fear; and his simple reply was:— "God be our help! now let us think how we may fight them to the best advantage."

His first object was to discover the most defensible position in the neighbourhood; and certainly that which he chose offered every advantage which could be desired. It consisted of a high ground, commanding the country towards Poitiers, naturally defended by the hedges of a vineyard, and only accessible, from the side of the city, by a hollow way flanked by banks and fences, and scarcely sufficiently large to admit the advance of more than four men-at-arms abreast. The ground on either hand of this hollow way was at that time rough and broken, so as to impede the movements even of infantry, and to render the manœuvres of a large body of cavalry nearly impracticable. On the left hand of the prince's position, looking towards Poitiers, it would appear that there was a little hamlet called Maupertuis, which has now disappeared;* and close by is a large deep hole, as if a well or pond had formerly occupied a part of the ground. From the highest point of the position a view is obtained of the whole country between that spot and Poitiers, together with a part of the city itself, so that everything of importance could be discerned which took place in the grounds that sweep down

variously stated; and it would appear that the manuscripts of Froissart vary much amongst themselves in regard to the forces which were actually present at the battle. This variation may have probably arisen from the bungling attempts of the French copyists to soften the disparity of numbers, for on one point all agree, namely, that sixty thousand horse passed the river Vienne at Chauvigny, besides those which crossed at Chatelleraut. M. de Châteaubriand says that there were *trois mille Chevaliers portant bannieres*, which I cannot help attributing to an error of the press, as the author himself could not but know, that such an army as three thousand banners would imply was never brought into the field.

* Some slight remains are still to be traced; and more were seen about two centuries ago. The name, however, is now no longer known; and an honest farmer in the neighbourhood assured me, that though born on the metairie, which his family had inhabited for many generations, he had never heard the name of Maupertuis, though relics of the battle of Poitiers were to be found in every part of the ground he cultivated.

from Beaumont to Savigny, Beauvoir, and almost to the banks of the Clain.

Here Edward the Black Prince encamped on the night of Saturday the 17th of September, and early the next morning made his dispositions for battle. These were simple, but judicious. His whole force was dismounted, and occupied the high ground; having a body of archers drawn up in the form of a harrow in front, the men-at-arms behind, and a strong body of bowmen garnishing the hedges on either side of the hollow way. Thus an attacking force was exposed to the galling flight of English arrows in climbing the hill, before the position of the men-at-arms could be assailed, while the nature of the ground rendered the superior number of the French of little avail.

Early on the Sunday morning the King of France also prepared for battle; and having heard mass and received the communion with his brother and his four sons, he drew out his host upon the open ground which lies to the south of Beauvoir; and, while De Ribaumont, Jean de Landas, Guichard d'Angle, and Guichard de Beaujeu, four of his most experienced officers, proceeded to reconnoitre the English position, the French monarch disposed his forces in the plains below. Three divisions or battles, as they were then called, were now formed, each consisting of 16,000 men-at-arms; the young Duke of Orleans, the king's brother, and the dauphin, the monarch's son, being appointed to command the two first of these bodies, while John himself led on the last. The two princes, however, whose inexperience required some assistance in the new task of command, were supported by a number of veteran officers, and the dauphin was accompanied by his brothers Louis and John, while Philip, the youngest of the race of Valois, then a mere boy, rode to battle by his father's side.

When the whole force was arrayed, King John, mounted on a white charger, proceeded along the ranks, thanking God for the mighty power which was there drawn forth to defend his right, and addressing words of encouragement and exultation to his troops. "When you are at Paris, at Orleans, at Rouen, at Chartres," he is reported to have said, "you threaten the English amongst yourselves, and wish that you were near them with bassinet

upon your brows. Here you now are—I now show them to you—so now prove your hatred towards them, and avenge all the evils they have done you; for without fail we shall fight them."

While the king was yet speaking, De Ribaumont and his companions returned, and made their report of the position and dispositions of the English; and strongly advised—as large bodies of cavalry would be quite useless from the nature of the ground—that the whole force might dismount, except 300 picked men destined to break the line of the English archers, and a small body of German horse to act as a reserve. His counsel was immediately followed, but while the consequent arrangements were taking place, an event occurred which delayed the battle till another day.

The church of Rome with indefatigable zeal still pursued the work of pacification; and gathering armies, were no sooner heard of, than legates were despatched to avert if possible the carnage which was threatened. Thus the Cardinal de Perigord had followed in haste the army of the King of France; and on the Sunday morning, quitting Poitiers with the gray of dawn, he rode eagerly towards the French camp, anxious to save the effusion of human blood. When he arrived at Beauvoir, the whole army was already in the field, the oriflamme was displayed, the troops were about to march, and more than 60,000 armed men, all eager to crush the handful of enemies which crowned the hill, looked with an evil eye upon the messenger of peace, as he rode along amidst their iron ranks. Still, however, the good cardinal proceeded in search of King John, and found him at last in the midst of that sea of waving banners, and dancing plumes, and glittering arms, surrounded with all the golden pomp of royalty, and the awful splendour of feudal war. The moment the cardinal beheld him, he dismounted; and bowing himself to the ground, besought him, with clasped hands, to hear him before he gave the command to march.

"Willingly, Lord Cardinal," the king replied; "what do you wish to say."

"You have here, sire," said the churchman, "the flower of all the chivalry of your realm, assembled against

a mere handful of English: and it will be far more honourable and profitable for you to have them in your power without battle, than to risk such a noble army in uncertain strife. I pray you then, in the name of God, to let me ride on to the Prince of Wales; to show him his peril, and to exhort him to peace."

"Willingly, my lord; but above all things be quick," replied the king; and the cardinal, without a moment's delay, hastened onward to the English camp. He found the Black Prince in the midst of his knights, armed at all points ready for battle; but by no means unwilling to listen to proposals of peace. His situation, indeed, was most precarious; and an immediate combat, against the infinitely superior numbers of the enemy, was amongst the least of the evils he had to apprehend. Even during the two preceding days his army had found a great scarcity of forage, and now provisions were almost totally exhausted. The French force was sufficiently numerous to blockade him in his camp; and he could not doubt that, if such a measure were pursued, he should soon be obliged to surrender unconditionally. To the application of the cardinal, therefore, he replied, at once, that he was willing to listen to any terms, by which his honour and that of his companions would be preserved.

The good prelate, having so far succeeded, returned to the King of France, and after much entreaty obtained a truce till sunrise the next morning, notwithstanding the strenuous opposition of Ribaumont and De Landas. The soldiers returned to their tents, and while a number of knights from either army rode out to reconnoitre the other, the cardinal passed and repassed continually between the two camps, beseeching the King of France to moderate his demands, and exhorting Edward to submit to his evil fortune. But on the one part he was opposed by the confidence of strength; and on the other by a resolute sense of honour. On the side of France, the king, as well he might, thought victory certain; and would listen to nothing but unconditional surrender. On the other hand, the Black Prince saw in the chances of battle a hope of success; and though he knew that, if the French resorted to blockade, he must yield at last, he resolved not to surrender till

vigourous resistance had saved his honour. All that the cardinal could obtain from him was an offer to resign all that he had captured in his expedition,—towns, castles, and prisoners, and to take an oath not to bear arms against France for seven entire years. But this proposal* fell so far short of the demands of the French king that pacification soon appeared hopeless.

While these transactions were taking place in the camps, a rencontre occurred in the field, which must not be passed over in silence. Immediately after the truce was granted, the famous John Chandos mounted his horse, armed as he was for battle, and rode towards the French lines, while the Marshal de Clermont, setting out in the same manner from the encampment of the King of France, to examine more nearly the position of the adversary, met the English knight midway. It so happened that both bore the same device above their coats of arms, which was that of a lady robed in blue, and surrounded by rays.† It would appear also that the marshal was aware that Chandos assumed a device similar to his own, for no sooner did he meet him

* Villani declares that the Prince of Wales also offered a sum of money, and it is stated that he demanded the enlargement of the King of Navarre, and a number of other concessions, from the King of France. Various speeches are also given at length, and particularly one, said to be delivered by the Bishop of Chalons in the king's council, which induced John to determine upon war, when he was on the very eve of accepting the terms offered by Edward. As this speech, however, represents the Duke of Lancaster as then in le Perche, when, to the certain knowledge of the king, the bishop, and every one else, he had quitted that province more than two months, the whole story is evidently fictitious; and I have rejected it altogether, adhering to Froissart, who had his account from the attendants of the Cardinal de Perigord, and who is confirmed in every particular of this transaction, where we have an opportunity of comparing his statements with certain records.

† The words of Froissart are so precise upon this device that I have rejected the account of Barnes, who declares that the shields of the two knights represented the Virgin Mary encompassed with rays, on a blue field. Froissart, however, speaks of this blue lady as one of the amorous devices of the day, which the knights wore not alone upon the shield, but as a sort of badge above their other habiliments, whether they were dressed for the hall or for the field. I have preserved it solely as a curious trait of chivalrous warfare, and of the manners of those times, and have, therefore, adhered as nearly as possible to the words of Froissart.

than he exclaimed, "I have long desired to see you, Chandos. How long is it since you first took upon you my device?"

"And you mine," rejoined the English knight; "for it is mine as much as yours."

"I deny it," cried De Clermont; "and were it not for the truce between us and you, I would show you on the spot that you have no right to bear it."

"Ha!" replied Chandos; "to-morrow morning then you will find me ready to defend it, and to prove, by deeds of arms, that it is mine as well as yours."

After some farther angry words the two knights separated; but their conversation, short as it was, cost the life of the Marshal de Clermont, who on the following day fell before the lance of Chandos. Early on the Monday morning the Cardinal de Perigord once more sought the presence of the French monarch; but he found John inflexible; and several of the leaders gave him a harsh and peremptory warning not to show himself again in their lines. The prelate then proceeded to bear the tidings of his failure to the prince, whom he found already prepared for battle. "Fair son," he said, "do as you best can, for you must needs fight; as I can find no means of peace or amnesty with the King of France."*

"Be it so, good father!" replied the young hero; "it is our full resolve to fight; and God will aid the right."

Although the scarcity of provisions already pressed hard

* Joined with Cardinal de Perigord was the Cardinal Bishop of Urgel; but as the first named legate was the only one who took any active part in the negotiations, I have not noticed in the text a man who seems totally to have neglected the holy mission with which he was charged. Amongst the errors of M. de Chateaubriand is the strange one, of representing the Cardinal of Perigord as a subject of the English king. He must surely have been well aware that the whole of the country of Perigord had long been attached to France, though originally forming part of Aquitaine, and that the capital of that country had only been taken within a few months by the Captal de Buch. The counts of Perigord had all through the war appeared as the adversaries of England, and the zealous subjects of France; and the cardinal, as far as a priest of Rome had any country at all, considered himself evidently as a Frenchman.

upon the English army, the delay of the engagement had been in other respects advantageous. Time had been thus afforded to dig deep trenches, and to raise palisades around the English position, the strength of which had been farther increased by the removal of the whole train of carts and baggage waggons to the weak side of the camp, and by the construction of a rampart against the attacks of the enemy at that point. The opportunity also of examining the ground more carefully had not been lost; and the result was a slight alteration in the disposition of the English forces. It being found that the hill on the right of the camp was less difficult of access than had been at first supposed, and that the dismounted men-at-arms, who lay at its foot under the command of the dauphin, would find little difficulty in climbing it to the English camp, Edward gave orders that 300 men-at-arms, and 300 archers on horseback, should take a circuit round the base, in order to pour in upon the flank of the dauphin's division, as soon as they were embarrassed with the ascent. This manœuvre was easily concealed from the enemy by the nature of the ground; and the Captal Le Buch, to whom the execution of the feat was entrusted, accomplished it without being discovered, and gained the cover of a woody ravine, within a few hundred yards of the left flank of the adverse army.*

By the time that all these dispositions were completed, the French force had begun its advance; and a splendid though an awful sight it must have been, to see that mighty host move forward to the attack, in all the pageantry of war. Still, while the ocean of waving plumes rolled up the hill, towards his little band, the Black Prince, in the beauty of youth, and zeal, and heroism, stood in the midst of his knights, and, in the same firm tone which had declared the day before, that *England should never have to pay his ransom*, now spoke the hope of victory.†

* Barnes, p. 501. Stow, 261.

† Froissart mentions the party detached to take the division of the Duke of Normandy, in flank, but he does not give the leader's name. The best English authorities, however, agree in stating that the detachment was commanded by the Captal de Buch.

In regard to this battle I have followed, with little if any variation, the account of Froissart, correcting him sometimes by Stow,

"Fair lords," he cried, pointing to the foe, "though we be so few against that mighty power of enemies, let us not be dismayed; for strength nor victory lies not in multitudes, but those to whom God gives it. If He will it that the day be ours, the highest glory of this world shall be given to us. If we die, I have the noble lord my father and two fair brothers, and you have each of you many a good friend who will avenge us well. Thus then, I pray you, fight well this day; and if it please God and St. George, I will also do the part of a good knight."

Chandos and Audley were now selected by the prince, as two of his best and most experienced officers, to remain by his side during the conflict, in order to afford him counsel in case of need. Audley, however, pleaded a vow, which he had made long before, to be the first in battle, and the best combatant on the English side, if ever he should be engaged where the King of England or any of his children commanded. Such a chivalrous undertaking, of course, met no opposition from the chivalrous commander; and Audley instantly placed himself in front of the army, accompanied alone by four chosen squires, to aid him in time of necessity. Not far distant, in advance of the English position, was also Sir Eustace d'Ambrecicourt, on horseback, eager as Audley to distinguish himself in the approaching fight.

The French army was now advancing upon the Prince of Wales, with a slow and equable march. The 300 chosen men-at-arms,* mounted on the strongest horses, and covered

who, we have every reason to believe, derived his information from the manuscript of an eye-witness. In every essential point, however, I find that Froissart is borne out by other historians; while Matteo Villani is almost always grossly wrong where he differs from Froissart, as I have shown in regard to the speech of the Bishop of Chalons.

* Barnes does not seem to have clearly comprehended this part of Froissart, for he represents the French marshals as leading forward a distinct body of men to support the three hundred, whereas, from the whole account given by Froissart, it is clear that the body selected to break the English archers formed part of what is called the battle of the marshals. The exact position of the Constable of Brienne, Duke of Athens, is difficult to ascertain. Froirsart decidedly represents him as in the very front of the

with armour of steel, led the way under the command of the Maréchal d'Audeham, and the Maréchal de Clermont; while a large body of German cavalry, under the Counts of Nassau, Saarbruck, and Nidau, came step by step to support the force destined to break the archers. On the right of the French line was the Duke of Orleans with 16,000 men-at-arms, and on the left advanced the dauphin and his two brothers, with an equal number; while King John himself led on the rear-guard, under the banner of the oriflamme.

The 300 *élite* soon reached the narrow way between the hedges, and putting their horses into a quicker pace, poured in to charge the harrow of archers in front as speedily as possible, in order to escape the bows, which they well knew lined each side of the approach. But the moment they were completely between the banks, the British bowmen sent such a flight of arrows amongst them, that all was in an instant disarray and confusion. The horses of the men-at-arms reared, plunged, and fell, while still the arrows rained death; and the bodies of those fallen nearly blocked up the narrow way in which they were advancing. A considerable number nevertheless urged their horses forward through all obstacles, and approached the first line of archers. There they were met by James Audley, who,

battle (chapter ccclix.); and yet in his first account of the general dispositions made by the King of France, we do not find any distinct place assigned to the constable. It would appear, however, that between the arrangements made for the attack on the Sunday morning, and the time that the battle began on the Monday, considerable alterations had taken place in the French plan of attack, and perhaps a distinct command might be assigned to the constable, which would appear from the statement of Froissart to have been the case, as the Black Prince is represented as attacking the Duke of Athens even before he charged the German counts. The constable held the chief command in the French armies after the king; and if I mistake not, he claimed of right the leading of the right wing when the monarch took the field in person. Let it be noted also, that although, in speaking of the French numbers, I have only used the term "more than sixty thousand," there can be no doubt that sixty thousand was far below the real amount; for, as I have before stated, sixty thousand horse are known to have passed the Viene at Chauvigny, and another division of the army advanced by Chatelleraut.

with his four squires alone, plunged into the thickest ranks of the enemy; and, during the whole day continued to fight his way forward, without any reference to the rest of the army. His first feat was the overthrow of the Maréchal d'Audeham, whom, after a long contest hand to hand, he hurled wounded to the ground. Audley paused to take no one, however, and leaving his fallen adversary to be made prisoner by some other person, he instantly rushed forward to seek another opening, still forcing his way on, as the enemy fell or gave way before him, till, late in the day, after having hewn a path through the thickest of the foe, almost to the gates of Poitiers, wounded in a thousand places, and fainting with loss of blood, he was borne from the field by the four faithful squires, who had followed him through that eventful morning.

Less fortunate was Sir Eustace d'Ambregicourt, who, spurring headlong upon the German cavalry that flanked the battle of the marshals, came to the ground with a knight, who rode out to oppose him; and before he could profit by a slight advantage which he had gained, he was borne down by four other lances; and, tied with ropes, was carried to the rear and thrown upon a baggage cart.

In the mean while the English archers continued their incessant hail of arrows upon the battle of the French marshals; the horses became every moment more unmanageable; the English men-at-arms passed through the interstices left purposely in the line of archers, and drove back the foremost of the enemy upon those that followed; the whole hollow way became a scene of frightful carnage; and, recoiling in disorder, the remains of the 300 *élite* were forced back through the ravine, carrying confusion into the advancing division of the Dauphin Duke of Normandy. At the same moment the Captal de Buch issued forth from the concealment in which he had lain, and charged the left flank of the dauphin, already shaken by the retreat of the advanced guard. The confusion in front, the charge of the English upon the flank, the impossibility of seeing what was passing before, and the quick-spread rumour that a part at least of the army was discomfited, carried terror into the rear ranks of the dauphin's division; and numbers who had not yet crossed swords with an enemy, regained their

horses with all speed, and fled madly from the battle. The effect of the horse archers too, who followed the captal, now began to show itself on the very front of the enemy's line. The keen eye of John Chandos marked it waver and open; and turning to the prince, he exclaimed, "Now, sir, ride forward, and the day is yours. Let us charge right on upon your adversary the King of France; for there lies the labour and the fate of the day. Well do I know that his high courage will never let him fly; but, God willing, he shall be well encountered."

"On! on! John Chandos!" replied the prince; "you shall not see me tread one step back, but ever in advance: bear on my banner! God and St. George be with us!"

The horses of the English force were all prepared; each man sprang into his saddle; and with levelled lances, the army, which had hitherto kept the hill, bore down upon the enemy, while the Captal de Buch forced his way on to rejoin the main body. To these two parties were opposed the whole of the German cavalry, the division of the dauphin, terribly thinned by flight, and a force under the Constable de Brienne, Duke of Athens; whether forming part of the dauphin's brigade or not does not appear. The first charge of the English was directed against the Germans, the rallying battalion of the French marshals, and the force commanded by the constable.* In an instant the hostile armies met with a terrible shock, and many a gallant knight was borne to earth, never to rise again. Denis Mountjoye! St. George, Guyenne! rung over the field through the clang of shivering lances, and galloping horse, and clashing steel. But at this moment took place, what may well be supposed to have decided the fate of the day. The Duke of Orleans, the brother of King John, with a body of 16,000 men-at-arms, fresh, and in full strength, lay a little farther down the hill to the right. The sight of the conflict, instead of inspiring either leaders or followers with the noble desire of rushing forward to the aid of their

* Barnes declares that the Duke of Athens was killed in this part of the engagement; but this was clearly not the case, as we find him fighting not long after near the king. (Froissart, chap. ccclx.)

companions, struck them with terror; and the appearance of a number of fugitives hurrying from the rear ranks of of the dauphin's division suggested flight also to those who looked on. A general panic seized the whole of that immense body; and 16,000 soldiers, who had not drawn a sword during the whole day, fled at once together with their commander.

The German horse were borne down in every direction by the charge of the English chivalry. The Counts of Nassau and Saarbruck were taken;* and the rest were driven back down the hill in utter disarray. The defeat of the Germans restored Sir Eustace d'Ambrecicourt to liberty, and springing on horseback, he joined his companions, who were now preparing to charge the division of the dauphin. That part of the French army, however, had been already broken by the Captal de Buch; and when the principal leaders beheld the complete rout of the marshals and the Germans, and saw the victorious force galloping rapidly down upon them, the responsibility attached to the charge of the three princes overcame their firmness. Totally devoid of personal fear, their alarm for the king's children bewildered the lords of Landas, Vaudenay, and St. Venant; and thinking the battle irretrievably lost, they hurried the princes from the field with 800 lances, determined for their own part, to conduct the royal family to a secure distance, and then return and die beside the king. The retreat of the princes at once disorganized the force which they commanded; but though a number of the nobles followed their example and fled, a number remained scattered over the whole field, fighting in separate bodies, with their own retainers gathered under their banners.

The most skilful and prudent retreated towards the reserve commanded by King John in person, who was now advancing with a division still more than numerically double the whole force with which the English began the battle. Few, however, seem to have been able to effect their complete junction with the king, though they obtained

* Froissart declares that the Count of Nidau also, the third German commander, was taken; but I do not find his name in the list of prisoners given by Robert of Avesbury, nor in that given by Edward the Black Prince himself.

a position nearly parallel with the line of his division; and thus at the time that the French monarch himself brought his troops into action, we find that the constable was still making head on the left, while a little higher the Duke of Bourbon, and a large body of knights and men-at-arms, still opposed a firm front to the advance of the English.

John himself beheld his troops defeated, and his nobles flying, with indignation, but not with alarm; for though he saw that the chances of the day were becoming less favourable, he relied with confidence on the very superior force he still commanded, on the number of gallant men he found around him, and on his own determined valour, to recover the field. "On foot! on foot!"* he exclaimed, as he beheld the English army pouring down upon him; and, springing to the ground, he made all his men dismount, and with shortened lances advance against the English charge. He himself, with his battle-axe in his hand, strode on under the banner of the Oriflamme, encouraging his men, rallying them where they wavered, and exhorting them but to do such deeds as he would do himself.

On the other part, the banner of Edward still advanced; and the black armour of the young commander was seen heading the knights of England as they again rushed forward to the fight.† The arrows of the archers, too, slumbered not in their quivers; and, before the lines closed, the fatal flight once more shook the ranks of the French. The men-at-arms poured in, and the fair order of the two hosts became what is expressively termed a *melée*. The battle was now fought knight to knight, and hand to hand, and gallantly did each man that was left do his devoir. The French king, on foot, like the simplest soldier, performed feats of valour enough to win twenty battles, were courage all; and the Black Prince, still urging on his course into the thickest of the enemy's ranks, all mild and gentle as he

* This would argue another change in the arrangements of the day before.

† An old officer riding near the prince is said to have exclaimed, on seeing the large body of reserve, headed by the king, marching up to the attack; "We are undone!" To which ill-judged speech the prince replied, with anger flashing from his eyes, "Dastard, thou liest—we are not undone while I yet live."

was in times of peace, appeared like a young lion, to use the words of Froissart, fell and terrible in the midst of the carnage. The Earls of Warwick and Suffolk,* the Captal de Buch, the Lords of Mucidan, Pommiers, Langayran, De Tarse, and the Souldich de l'Estrade, with Audley, Chandos, Burghersh, and many more, urged the fight successfully on the part of England, while the Dukes of Bourbon and Athens, the Lords of Landas, Argenton, Chauveny, Joinville, John of Saintré,† and a number of others, fought and died upon the side of France. But still the English maintained their advantage; the French were driven back step by step; their forces became separated into distinct groups, or cooped up in narrow spaces; knight after knight fell around the king; John himself, notwithstanding acts of almost incredible valour, failed in preserving order and array, or in maintaining his ground; and driven back nearly to the gates of Poitiers, which were now shut against him, he protracted his resistance long after success was hopeless. De Ribaumont, by this time, was no more: but Geoffrey de Charny, who, as one of the most renowned of all the host, had been chosen to bear the Oriflamme to that fatal field, never left his sovereign's side; and as long as the sacred banner floated over his head, John would not believe the day was lost. At length, however, the English knights hewed their way to the spot, the Oriflamme wavered and fell, but not before Geoffrey de Charny was numbered with

* The Earls of Warwick and Suffolk, the English marshals, commanded that part of the army immediately opposed to John. The Earl of Warwick took the Archbishop of Sens with his own hand, and obtained, according to Barnes (page 509), a ransom of eight thousand pounds from his prisoner.

† Amongst the rest were two famous Scottish warriors, William Douglas, who had, in the autumn of the preceding year led an expedition into England, and, after calling upon his country a desolating invasion by Edward III., had joined the King of France in Normandy; and the other, Archibald Douglas, the son of James, the companion of the Bruce. The first was forced from the field of Poitiers by his attendants, the second was taken. The story, however, told by Lord Hailes (vol. i. p. 241), of his having passed unknown, and been ransomed for a trifle, appears to be incorrect; for we find by Rymer (vol. iii. part i. p. 144), that Archibald Douglas was a prisoner in England, and that his name and quality were perfectly well known.

the dead. John's hope fell with it; but still surrounded on every side by foes, who pressed eagerly forward to make him prisoner, he cleared the space immediately around himself and his little son with his battle-axe; and though all were anxious to capture him alive, he had nearly lost his life by protracting his resistance. At length a gigantic knight of Artois, who, having been banished and outlawed by France, had taken service with England, rushed into the circle, exclaiming in French, "Yield, sire, yield!"

"To whom shall I yield?" demanded the king in the same tongue. "Where is my cousin the Prince of Wales? If I saw him I would speak."

"He is not here, sire," replied Denis de Mortbec; "but yield to me, and I will bring you safe to him."

"And who are you?" asked John.

"I am Denis de Mortbec, a poor knight of Artois," replied the other; "but now serving England, because I am a banished man from my own country."

"Well," cried the king, "I yield to you;" and thereupon, in sign of surrender, he gave him his right-hand gauntlet.

In the mean while, Edward the Black Prince had fought through the whole day, and had never paused till the victory was won. At length, however, the banners and pennons which had covered the whole field began to disappear; and nothing was seen but dead and dying, and groups of prisoners, and parties of fugitives flying over the distant country. Chandos now advised the prince to halt; and pitching his banner on the summit of a little mound, to fix that as a rallying point for his army, which was now in full pursuit. The prince, who was by this time fatigued, and heated with strife and exertion, followed the advice of his companion, and raised his banner on a spot where some scattered bushes and large stones crown a rising ground, commanding a view over all the country round. He here dismounted also, and took off his helmet; and a small tent being pitched, and wine brought from his former encampment, he drank with the little band of knights who accompanied him, while his trumpets sounded a recall to the standard.

Amongst the first whom the sound of the trumpets brought back were the two marshals of the English army, the Earls of Warwick and Suffolk; and the prince instantly demanded news of the King of France, for whose safety he was greatly anxious. On being informed that he must either be taken or dead, for that he had certainly not quitted the field, Edward instantly despatched the Earl of Warwick and Reginald Lord Cobham to seek and protect him, in case they should find him still alive. As those nobles rode on in execution of the prince's command, they soon perceived a dense mass of English men-at-arms advancing towards them, but seemingly agitated by some contention amongst themselves; and, riding up, they found that the object of strife was the unfortunate King of France, who had been snatched out of the hands of Mortbec, and whom every one was desirous of claiming as his own prisoner. The marshal soon made his way through the press, and, with the power which was intrusted to him in the armies of that day, compelled the contending parties to clear the space around the king, whose life was in actual danger, during the fierce struggle that was going on for his person.

The Earl of Warwick and Lord Cobham instantly dismounted, and saluted the captive monarch with the deepest reverence. Keeping back the multitude, they led the king immediately to the Prince of Wales, who received his conquered adversary with profound and touching respect. He bent his knee before the king; and, calling for wine, he presented the cup with his own hands to the unhappy prince. The heart that could boldly undertake and boldly win the battle of Poitiers was one that could feel and reverence the majesty of adversity.

The battle itself was over by noon; but all the pursuing parties had not returned till evening. It was then that the Black Prince found the magnitude of his victory. With less than eight thousand men he had conquered far more than sixty thousand.* Nearly two thousand men-at-arms and fifteen hundred archers had fallen upon the part of England; but the French had left dead upon the field eight

* Scala Chronica.

thousand men-at-arms, besides an immense number of the commons, and three thousand men-at-arms had fallen in their flight.* A king, a prince, an archbishop, thirteen counts, sixty-six barons, and more than two thousand knights, remained prisoners in the hands of the English, with a number of other soldiers, sufficient to render the captives double in number to their conquerors.

All the baggage of the French army was taken by the

* The names of the principal prisoners, as given in a schedule sent by the prince himself to England, and preserved in the Archæologia (vol. i, p. 213), compared with the list which ends the history of Robert of Avesbury, are as follows:—

John, King of France.
Philip his youngest son.
James of Bourbon, prince of the blood, Count of Ponthieu.
John of Artois, Count d'Eu.
The Count of Roucy.
The Count of Vaudemont.
The Count of Dampmartin.
The Count of Nassau.
The Count of Saarbruck.
The Chatelain d'Amposta.
The Count of ———.§
The Count of ———.§
The Archbishop of Sens.
The Viscount de Narbonne.
The Viscount de Vichehoard.
The Viscount de Valemont.
The Viscount de Beaumont.
The Lord of Sully.
The Lord Raoul de Coucy.
The Lord of Aubigny.
The Lord of Denyn.
The Lord of St. Dizier.
The Lord of La Tour.
The Lord of Amboise.
The Lord of Derval.
The Lord of Magnoles.
Charles of Artois, Count of Longueville.
The Count of Tankarville.
The Count of Ventadour.
The Count of Vendome.
The Lord of Planuches.
The Lord of Montague.
The Lord of Beaufremont.
The Lord of Plumory.
The Lord of Basentin.
The Lord of Rochefort.
The Lord of Vellehernail.
The Lord of Maignelers.
The Lord of Croy.
Arnold of Audenham, Marshal of France.
Guichard d'Angle, Seneschal of Saintonge.
Maurice de Mauvinet, Seneschal of Tours.
Renauld de Guillon, Seneschal of Poitou.
Peter de Creon, Kt.
Guichard d'Arx, Kt.
Gaultier de Castellion, Kt.—Chatillon, I believe.
Guichard de Beaugon, Kt.

A number of others were taken whose names are not given, nor are those names here written, perfectly clear in regard to orthography; for the Norman French used by the English of that period had become so corrupt, especially in spelling, that the names of the noble families of France, as written in the genealogical histories of that country, are hardly to be recognized in the state papers of England.

§ Two names I cannot clearly make out.

forces of Edward; and as the barons of France had marched to the field of Poitiers feeling certain of triumph, and in those days the rich armour of the captives became immediately the property of the captors, immense stores of valuable ornaments of all kinds, but especially jewelled baldrics, enriched the meanest soldier amongst the conquerors. The helmet which the King of France had put off, and on which, according to the common custom of monarchs, he bore a small coronet of gold beneath the crest, was delivered to the Prince of Wales, who sent it off at once from the field of battle, as the best trophy he could offer to his father;* and such was the first intimation which Edward III. received of the great victory. The immense number of prisoners, for whose support the prince had no means of providing, was diminished by permitting the greater part to go at liberty, on giving an oath to present themselves at Bordeaux by the Christmas ensuing, in order either to pay the ransom appointed or yield themselves to prison.

Thus passed the battle of Poitiers, on Monday, the 19th day of September, A. D. 1356, the most extraordinary victory that the annals of the world can produce; and yet, before two centuries had passed, the spot where those mighty deeds were enacted had become unknown. In an after age the point was eagerly investigated and keenly contested; but at length, in 1743, the exact position of the English army seems to have been ascertained. Nevertheless, few of the people of Poitiers, or the neighbouring villages, can give any information relating to the subject; and the traveller who expects to find that famous field as well known as its importance deserves will be much mistaken. He will search for it long before he finds it; but if he seek out a peasant's house called *les Bordes*, near some tall trees, he may be led to the ground where the Black Prince was entrenched, and hear all that those who dwell upon the spot know of the battle of Poitiers.

The vineyard, mentioned by Froissart, is no longer there, and the hedges have disappeared; but still the hollow way between its steep banks is to be seen, and the entrenchments of the English camp may yet be traced. The pea-

* Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 129.

sant, too, declares that in ploughing the slope towards Poitiers he frequently turns up human bones, and rusty armour, and heads of arrows.

> "Scilicet et tempus veniet cum finibus illis
> Agricola, incurvo terram molitus aratro,
> Exesa inveniet scabrâ rubigine pila:
> Aut gravibus rastris, galeas pulsabit inanes,
> Grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulchris."

At a little farm house, too, not far from the spot, some broken lances and large bones are shown; and this is all that now remains to attest the field of Poitiers.

Man may well ask his own heart, as he passes over the spot, "Is this all, indeed?—all for which so many heroes have died—to be forgotten—to have their very burial places scarcely known—the glorious feats and gallant actions, which, even in dying, they thought would be immortal, overwhelmed beneath the lumber of history, or blotted out by fresh comments on the same bloody theme—the thrones they fought for, and the lands they won, passed unto other dynasties, and all the objects of their mighty daring as unachieved as if they had not been?"

CHAPTER X.

THE ATTENDANTS OF THE CARDINAL DE PERIGORD TAKE PART WITH FRANCE.—INDIGNATION OF THE BLACK PRINCE.—HIS GENEROSITY TOWARDS AUDLEY.—HIS BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS KING JOHN.—HE RETURNS TO BORDEAUX.—NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE.—PROFUSION OF THE SOLDIERS, AND OF THE PRINCE.—HE RETURNS TO LONDON.—HIS ENTRANCE INTO THE CAPITAL.—SUMMARY OF OTHER EVENTS.—WAR WITH SCOTLAND AND SUBSEQUENT TRUCE.—LIBERATION OF THE KING OF SCOTLAND.—AFFAIRS OF BRITANNY.—LIBERATION OF CHARLES OF BLOIS.—SIEGE OF RENNES.—EXPLOITS OF DU GUESCLIN.—CAPTURE OF RENNES.

In regard to the conduct of Edward the Black Prince during the battle, and after the victory of Poitiers, one or two anecdotes are related which must not be omitted here. In the first of these we trace a strong resemblance between

the prince and his father, and that indeed principally in some of the less amiable points in the character of Edward III. The story, however, must not be suppressed on that account; and perhaps the readiness with which the Black Prince listened to the counsels of generous humanity, and overcame in an instant the first angry burst of passion, shows him in a more amiable point of view than if he had been totally free from his father's fierceness.

We have already seen that the Cardinal de Perigord came and went continually between the two armies; and as a minister of peace and religion he was received with all his attendants into the English camp without either suspicion or precaution. The whole dispositions of the Prince of Wales thus became known to him, and also to his followers; whom Edward of course looked upon as precisely in the same circumstances as the cardinal himself, that is to say, perfectly neutral. Amongst the household of the cardinal, however, were many young knights and squires of noble family, the principal of whom was the lord Robert de Duras. Seeking to share in the victory they expected the French to win, they made some excuse to leave the prelate, shortly after he had bidden the Black Prince adieu, on the morning of the battle, and hastened with all speed to join the army of King John, though such a proceeding was, according to Froissart, contrary to the law of arms in that day. Having no authorized leader, they chose one for themselves; and the Seneschal d'Amposta, one of the cardinal's chief officers, willingly undertook the office.

In the very first charge of the Prince of Wales, however, the seneschal was taken; and Edward, in the out-burst of his indignation at beholding a man, whom he had admitted to his camp as mediator, now armed against him as an enemy, commanded his head to be struck off for a spy. Chandos, however, soon appeased him, suggesting that the cardinal might possibly have excuses to offer for the conduct of his officer, which would palliate, if not justify, what had occurred. The Seneschal of Amposta was accordingly detained as a prisoner; but the prince afterwards seeing the young Robert de Duras, the cardinal's nephew, lying dead beside his fallen banner, he ordered some of his

attendants to raise the body on a buckler, and bear it into Poitiers, commanding them to deliver the corpse to the cardinal in his name, less, perhaps, as a tribute of regard than as a tacit reproach.

No sooner was the battle over, than Edward asked eagerly for his gallant friend Audley, and commanded him to be brought into his tent, upon the litter in which his squires were carrying him from the field. When the prince saw him, he stooped down over him, and congratulated him on the fame he had acquired that day, giving him the glorious name of *Preux*. Audley, as bound by the rules of chivalry, denied all merit; but Edward would not hear his abnegation, replying, "Sir James, I and others hold you to be the best knight fighting on our side this day: and to do you honour, and enable you to follow more gallantly your career of arms, I retain you for ever as my knight, and assign you 500 marks by the year, upon my lands in England."

Audley expressed his thanks in the same modest manner in which he had received the prince's praises, and shortly after was borne out from Edward's presence. No sooner was he in his own tent, however, than he sent for several of his dearest friends and nearest relations; and called round him the squires who had accompanied him through the field. He then, in the presence of his kindred, made over, without power of recall, to his four gallant attendants, the gift which the prince had bestowed upon him. His liberality, however, did not ultimately impoverish himself; for no sooner did Edward the Black Prince hear of the manner in which Audley had disposed of the revenue he had assigned him, and learn his motives for so doing, than he not only confirmed the gift made by his friend, but added 600 marks to the annuity he had before granted.

After rewarding his companions, the next task of the young hero was to console his fallen enemies. Toward night a splendid entertainment was served in the tent of the Prince of Wales to the King of France and all the principal prisoners. John himself, with his son, and six of the highest nobles of France, were seated at a table raised above the rest; but the surprise of all was excited, when

they found that no place had been reserved for Edward himself. Their wonder was farther increased, however, on perceiving, that it was the purpose of the victor of Poitiers to serve the unhappy monarch as page during his repast,—an office which he had performed for his own father after the combat at Calais, and which, however much it might show the noble humility of the young conqueror, implied in chivalrous times no sort of degradation. John could hardly be prevailed upon to take the food set before him, while his host and his vanquisher remained standing, or presented him the cup upon his knee. Repeatedly he pressed the prince to sit beside him; but Edward still replied, in terms calculated to carry effectual balm to the spot in which the monarch's pride, both as a man and a warrior, was most severely wounded. "No," he said, "I have never yet sufficiently distinguished myself, to sit at the table of so high a prince, and so valiant a knight, as you, sire, have shown yourself this day. Be not sad, dear sire," he added, marking the natural affliction which the king's countenance expressed—"Be not sad; for although God has not granted you your will this day, still most certainly my lord and father, Edward, will show you all the honour and friendship you could desire; and will grant you such mild conditions, that you shall be better friends than ever you have been: and truly, in my opinion, you have many reasons to rejoice, although fortune has not been entirely favourable to you; for this day you have won the brightest renown, and have shown yourself the best knight upon your side. Far be it from me to jest, dear sire; for know that all on our party, and who have seen the whole, award to you the prize and the renown."

"Till that moment John had endured his misfortune without a murmur," says an eloquent writer of the present day.* "No complaint had issued from his lips; no mark of human weakness had betrayed the man; but when he saw himself treated with such generosity, when he saw the same enemies who had refused him on the throne the title of King of France acknowledge him to be such in the midst of chains, he felt himself conquered indeed. The

* Châteaubriand.

tears burst from his eyes, and mingled with the marks of blood upon his cheeks.* At the banquet of captivity the Christian king might say with the Psalmist, 'My tears have mingled with the wine of my cup.'"

The example of the Black Prince was contagious: the same spirit of chivalrous generosity spread throughout the English camp. Every one treated his prisoner like a friend; and that night an immense number both of knights and squires were admitted to ransom, on terms of courtesy, says Froissart,† such as never before were known. The captors simply required of the prisoners, we are told, to declare in good faith what they could afford to pay, without pressing themselves too hard; for it was not at all their wish, the English said, to ransom knights or squires in such a manner as to prevent them from maintaining their station in society, from serving their lords, or from riding forth in arms to advance their name and honour.

The following morning Edward the Black Prince offered up solemn thanksgivings on the field of battle for the glorious victory he had obtained, and then, striking his tents, marched onwards towards Bordeaux. The city of Poitiers itself, which had by this time been garrisoned by the Lord of Roye and a strong body of men-at-arms, he left unattempted; and following the dictates of a wise moderation, instead of yielding to the excitement of victory, and risking all that he had won by seeking more, he made good his retreat to the centre of the English territories in Aquitaine, before his enemies could recover sufficiently from their dismay to oppose his passage, while he was embarrassed with prisoners and loaded with spoil.

The road to Bordeaux remained clear; the capture of the French king, more than even the defeat of his army, had paralyzed his people; and, though the divisions of the Dauphin and the Duke of Orleans reunited would have been more than sufficient to cut off the retreat of the Prince of Wales, not an effort was made to oppose his march to

* John had received two wounds in the face before he surrendered at Poitiers, which we learn from a letter of the Count of Armagnac to the Consuls of Nismes, in October following the battle.

† Chap. ccclx.

the Gascon capital.* After entering the English territory his advance was a constant triumph; and the most enthusiastic rejoicings awaited his arrival at Bordeaux. The same joy spread throughout England on the first tidings of his victory. Thanksgivings to God were publicly offered up by king and people; but it is a singular and not uninteresting fact, that the moderation displayed by the Black Prince towards the captive monarch seemed to have been received as a general example throughout the land; and instead of the wild and excessive hopes and schemes, to which great success sometimes gives rise, we find the desire of peace and tranquillity mingling constantly with the natural joy of victory.

In the mean time the courtesy and deference which Prince Edward had displayed, in the first hours of his great triumph, towards the King of France, did not at all diminish; and occupying one half of the Abbey of St. Andrew, which was at that time the residence of the Black Prince himself, John received every kind and generous attention which his circumstances permitted. Not long after the return of the victorious army to Bordeaux, the Cardinal de Perigord and another legate presented themselves at that city in order to negotiate a peace; but the just cause Edward had to imagine that the cardinal had taken part against him in the affair of Poitiers induced him to refuse to see the legates for several days.† His anger was at length moderated; and the Cardinal de Perigord, being admitted to his presence, cleared himself of all connivance at the conduct of his nephew and attendants, and soon found means to reinstate himself fully in the good opinion of the young commander.

The negotiations for peace were now formally begun, and continued during the whole of the winter. The Prince of Wales,‡ who had received full powers from his father, was firm, but still so moderate and so gentle that his con-

* Though no effort was made to retake the king, yet several of the French nobility exerted themselves to render his state of captivity more tolerable; and we find that the Count of Armagnac sent to Bordeaux a considerable quantity of plate for his use.

† Froissart, chap. ccclxxi.

‡ Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 125.

duct drew forth a commendatory letter from the pope,* whose prejudices were of course in favour of France. No final peace, however, could be obtained; and the result of many conferences was the proclamation of a truce to last for two years from the following Easter.

The details of this treaty were nearly similar to those which had been drawn up on a former occasion;† and it may be merely necessary to state, that the truce included all the allies and adherents of both monarchs, though, as in some other cases, it was provided that the vassals of either party might carry on the war against the vassals of the other, without the truce being considered as broken.‡ At the same time, the two kings bound themselves to give no countenance or assistance to any noble in these minor feuds. Another particular, connected with this treaty, is worthy of notice, as it evinces strongly the growing disposition of European monarchs to resist the interference of the holy see in anything beyond mere mediation. In regard to Flanders, and on several other occasions, the popes had not contented themselves with interposing be

* Barnes, p. 518. † Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 133.

‡ The right of what was then called "la guerre privée" was considered one of the most important and inviolable of a French noble's privileges: it was clearly and distinctly recognized by law, and before the period of which I speak had been guarded and defined by a number of regulations. About this time, or a little afterwards, it was determined that each private war must be preceded by a declaration of hostility of at least fifteen days' term, and that if a truce or a peace should be concluded between the principal belligerents, and any of the relations of either party chose to remain in hostility, the latter were bound formally to declare their intentions. Any act of bloodshed without these preliminaries was held to be murder. Not only the vassals and dependants of any feudal lord were bound to take part in his quarrel as soon as he declared war, but his relations to the third degree, with all their vassals and dependants. A private war might be declared by one noble against another upon almost any pretext; but to guard this privilege from the excesses to which it might naturally lead, it was ordained that no cause already under the cognizance of a court of law, and no murder on which justice had already acted, could afford cause of war. It was also in the power of any one who felt himself too weak to defend his rights against a powerful opponent to demand protection from the king or a court of law, when a truce was instantly decreed.

tween the contending powers, armed only with exhortation and remonstrance, but had proceeded to anathematize and excommunicate. This rendered their arbitration dangerous; but in the present treaty we find it strictly covenanted, that no party is to have recourse to the artillery of the Roman church upon any matter connected with the suspended war.

During the time that the negotiations proceeded, the city of Bordeaux became one general scene of festivity and rejoicing. All the principal prisoners were bought* by the Black Prince from their captors;† an immense number of those who had been suffered to go at large upon parole came in, and paid their ransoms, and the purses of the English soldiery overflowed with wealth. It has been generally observed, that while avarice is a frequent consequence of the slow and laborious acquisition of riches, money obtained in sudden and unexpected turns of fortune is generally lavished in profusion and waste. Such, at least, was the case with all the gold that flowed into Bordeaux in consequence of the victory of Poitiers. Men whose lives had been risked in gaining it, feeling that existence might be periled again the next day, made haste to enjoy what they had acquired, and immense sums were spent in thoughtless merriment before the day arrived for sailing towards England.

Nor is Edward the Black Prince exempt from the same charge of heedless extravagance, in which all the old writers class him with his soldiers. In a great number of instances we find that the want of economy he displayed may rather be attributed to a noble though somewhat thoughtless generosity than to any desire of selfish gratification. The splendid rewards which he bestowed upon Chandos and Audley‡ may be cited in proof; and there is every reason

* As an example of the sums given for the most important prisoners on the present occasion it may be stated, that twenty-five thousand crowns of gold were given by the Black Prince to the captors of James of Bourbon, for all their right and title in the prisoner. Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 132. The Viscount of Narbonne only paid five thousand florins of gold as a ransom to the person who captured him at Poitiers. (See D. Vaissette, tom. iv. p. 288.)

† Froissart, chap. ccclxxi.

‡ Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 131.

to believe that soldiers of all ranks, who had distinguished themselves under his command, shared in the bounty of the prince.

In the end of April, Edward, having provided for the government of Gascony during his absence, set sail for England, and landed at Plymouth, in the beginning of May, 1357.* He thence proceeded direct to London, which he entered on the 24th of that month.† His intention had been announced long before his arrival, and everything was prepared in the city to receive him with pomp and splendour. The clergy came forth in procession to meet him, the streets were hung with carpets, silks, and fine tapestry; and before each house every kind of arms that it contained, shields, helmets, breastplates, entire coats of mail, lances, swords, sheafs of arrows, maces and battle-axes, were piled up in the form of trophies, to adorn the way as he passed. The Black Prince himself, however, took as small a share as possible in this exhibition of triumph, feeling deeply how mortifying the whole scene must be to the unhappy monarch who accompanied him. John, splendidly dressed, and mounted on a superb white charger, entered the gates of London, and proceeded through the city towards Westminster Hall,‡ while his humble conqueror, habited in unostentatious simplicity, rode by his side on a small black horse, not displeased, perhaps, that the splendour of his father's capital should shine out in the eyes of the foreign prince, but unwilling to taste a moment's triumph that could inflict a moment's pain.

Edward III. received the royal prisoner in state, in the great hall of his palace at Westminster; but, rising from his throne as the King of France approached, he embraced and welcomed him as his cousin and guest, and bade him be of good cheer. John bore all the painful ceremony with manly

* Froissart says that the prince landed at Sandwich; but the paper ordering the preparation of carriages, &c. at Plymouth, for the conveyance of his baggage to London (Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 133), would seem conclusive in favour of Walsingham and others, who state that the Black Prince and his prisoners disembarked at the latter port.

† Barnes, p. 526.

‡ Barnes, pp. 526, 527.

fortitude; but though the English monarch and his son did everything that circumstances permitted to soothe his cares, he could not but feel with grief the mighty loss which himself, his children, and his realm sustained in his captivity, and show that grief as became a firm and dignified spirit. When Edward strove to console him, and besought him to lay aside his sadness, he replied in the words of Scripture, "How shall we sing a song in a strange land?" But still, though he experienced to the full all the bitterness of his lot, he endured it with noble magnanimity; and softened, but not crushed, by the sweet uses of adversity, his character appears to far greater advantage after the defeat of Poitiers than ever it did in the pride and impetuosity of uncontrolled power.

The palace of the Savoy, then a building of great splendour, with gardens extending to the Thames,* was appointed for the residence of the monarch; and here, as we learn from every account, the same delicate kindness which had attended his first reception by the Black Prince was exercised in order to soften the sorrows of his captivity in a foreign land.

It may be necessary now to notice briefly a variety of events which had occurred, in other places, while Edward the Black Prince had proceeded from conquest to conquest in the south of France. We have already seen that Edward III. had been recalled from the neighbourhood of Calais in 1355, by a new aggression on the part of the Scots, under the command of William Douglas. A knight of France, we are told, named Garenceris, had been sent over by John,† in order to induce the people of Scotland to break the truce, and a sum of ten thousand marks, distributed judiciously amongst the prelates and nobles, soon put the Douglas at the head of a sufficient force to commence active hostilities against England, which he immediately did, without paying any attention to the treaty existing between the two countries. His first attempt was an unsuccessful one upon the castle of Roxburgh, and his second, more fortunate, upon the citadel of Berwick, of which he captured either the whole or a detached tower.

* Stow's Survey, p. 490. † Scala Chronica.

The city, however, remained in the hands of the English; and Edward, hastening his return from France, issued a general summons to all the men-at-arms of the border counties, and appointed the rendezvous at Newcastle,* on the 1st of January. He then marched forward upon Scotland, vowing that, as the Scots had again broken their faith, and taken advantage of the difficulties of his foreign war to attack him at home, he would seek such unsparing revenge, that men should only say when he left the country, "This once was Scotland."†

A strong body of soldiers, under Sir Walter de Mauny, preceded the king's army; and, as soon as he arrived at Berwick, that gallant and experienced commander gave orders to mine the castle.‡ His design being discovered by the garrison, and the news of Edward's coming having spread amongst them, the danger and the inutility of resistance induced them to evacuate the place, and retreat into the interior of the country.

Edward reached Berwick shortly after, and then proceeding to enter Scotland, he executed a part, at least, of the threat which he had made on commencing his march. It were little profitable to trace the steps of the English king, who, forgetting that the Scots were a nation fighting for their liberty and their rights, treated them as a race of rebels, and so completely laid waste the country by fire that the period has received in history the name of the burned Candlemas. Fire, indeed, was the only means of revenge left him to employ, for the Scotish leaders and people had retreated on his approach, and swept the land of everything that could be carried away.

His provisions soon failed: a fleet which he had collected to bring supplies to his army by sea was dispersed by storms, a number of his vessels were wrecked, and the rest sought shelter in the ports of England. After waiting for many days in vain, expecting the arrival of reinforcements, the monarch was forced to retreat; and in passing the Tweed lost several men by a sudden attack made by one of the Douglases.

* Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 113.
† Froissart, add. 17.
‡ Robert of Avesbury.

The most remarkable fact connected with this expedition, however, yet remains to be told.* In marching back from Scotland, Edward paused for a few days at Roxburgh Castle, and there, on the 20th of January, 1346,† he received from the Baliol a cession of all that prince's right and title to the crown of Scotland; an act which, by the strong bond of universal indignation, united at once the turbulent and factious nobles of Scotland amongst themselves, and by general contempt broke every tie which Baliol still possessed on the kingdom that he claimed. Edward, in return for the nominal gift which the claimant of the Scottish crown bestowed, granted him the more solid benefit of an annual income; and Baliol having sold, with his empty title, his honour and his fame, sank into the apathy of degradation, lived despised, and died nearly forgotten.

Almost at the same time that Baliol chose for consummating this unworthy action, the Scottish lords, at Perth,‡ deputed several commissioners to treat with the English king, in regard to the liberation of their legitimate monarch. After Edward's return to England§ the negotiations for this purpose were pursued with little intermission for many months; and at length a treaty was signed, by which a truce of ten years was established between England and Scotland, and the liberation of the king was granted in consideration of a ransom of a hundred thousand marks. This convention was concluded at Berwick on the 3d of October, 1357: David Bruce was instantly freed from the imprisonment which he had so long suffered; and the wars of the houses of Bruce and Baliol terminated for ever.

Thus passed the affairs of Scotland till after the battle of Poitiers; but during the same period a variety of events

* The dates of the state papers in Rymer prove that this transaction occurred as Edward returned from Scotland, and not as he went, which has been frequently asserted. Baliol alleges as his excuse for the act, his age and infirmities.

† Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 115.

‡ Rymer, tom. iii part i. p. 114.

§ Edward had reached Westminster by the 8th of March. (See Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 118.)

had taken place in Britanny, deserving some attention. On the retreat of Philip of Navarre and the Duke of Lancaster from Normandy, the brother of the imprisoned king proceeded to England, and received the letters patent of the English monarch, appointing him his *locum tenens* and captain general in Normandy,* while the duke, now named to the supreme command in Britanny,† marched thither from Cotentin, accompanied by his young charge, John de Montford.‡ About the same time, also, Charles of Blois was liberated, having stipulated to pay a ransom of seven hundred thousand florins of gold, for the discharge of which, and the fulfilment of the other articles in the convention entered into between Edward and himself, his two sons John and Guy, were left as hostages in the hands of the King of England. Hostilities were immediately resumed by both parties in Britanny: the Duke of Lancaster marched upon Rennes, and laid siege to that town; and Charles of Blois collected an army in order to relieve it. A gallant resistance was offered to the arms of the English prince by De Penhouet the governor,§ while the famous Bertrand du Guesclin, then climbing, by slow and painful steps, to the height of renown, lay concealed in the deep forests which at that period covered the greater part of Britanny, and ha-

* Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 130.

† Froissart declares that the Duke of Lancaster and Philip of Navarre were with Godfrey of Harcourt in the county of Evreux and other parts of Normandy during the march of the Prince of Wales and the battle of Poitiers, and that they strove to join him, but found the passages of the rivers guarded. This, however, I have already shown to be incorrect, from the papers in Robert of Avesbury, when refuting the assertion that it was the intention of the Black Prince, on the contrary, to join his cousin in Normandy. Were any farther proofs of the inaccuracy both of Froissart and Villani on these points necessary, they would be found in the papers in Rymer (vol. iii. part i. pp. 126, 128, 129), which show that on the 8th of August the Duke of Lancaster, after having returned to Cotentin, was directed towards Britanny; and that on the 4th of September Philip of Navarre was in England. Therefore it is evident that neither the Duke of Lancaster nor the Navarrese prince could be attempting to force their way from le Perche, to join the prince upon his march, which took place in the end of August and the beginning of September.

‡ Robert of Avesbury, p. 245.

§ Lobinau, p. 351.

rassed the foraging parties of the duke by his indefatigable activity.

A variety of means were employed by the English commander to force his way into Rennes, but in vain; and a strict blockade became his only resource. By that measure, however, he soon reduced the garrison to extremity; and one of his own stratagems, turned against himself, alone saved them from the necessity of immediate surrender. In hopes of drawing the besieged into an ambuscade, the duke, well aware of the pressing necessity of their situation, ordered a large drove of hogs to be driven out into the fine meadows that border the Vilaine. The hogs were accordingly brought to a little distance from the gates, while a party of English soldiers lay covered by some bushes in the neighbourhood. The besieged, however, were not to be deceived, and, perceiving the design of their enemies, they fell upon a curious scheme for enticing the hogs into the city, without venturing beyond the walls themselves. A sally port was thrown open close to the drove; and a young sow was hung up alive by the heels to the lintel. Her cries instantly attracted the hogs, who rushed jostling towards the gate; the sow was then cut down and driven on, still uttering her usual discordant cries. The hogs followed through the doorway, and the rush of the English soldiers to recover the drove but hastened its loss. The stubborn quadrupeds, with their instinctive perception of the way their owners wish them not to go, rushed on into the town, and proved a very seasonable relief to the inhabitants of Rennes.

On another occasion the duke was deceived by false intelligence, and Du Guesclin, with a small supply, forced his way into the place; but famine still made rapid progress, and the blockade became more strict than ever. A great deal of chivalrous courtesy, however, was displayed by the English commander to the gallant knights who so well maintained the interests of their party. Du Guesclin, whose talents seem to have been rightly estimated by the Duke of Lancaster, long before his own countrymen perceived his full merit, was invited to the English camp; and, being furnished with letters of safe conduct, visited the adverse general, who presented him with a valuable charger,

on which, the next day, he ran a tilt with an English knight, named Nicholas Angorne,* who, after having gallantly maintained his fame in the first three encounters, was at length discomfited by the Breton, and cast nearly lifeless to the ground.

In the mean time the truce, which I have already mentioned, was concluded at Bordeaux; by one of the articles of which the Black Prince expressly stipulated that he would do all in his power to cause the Duke of Lancaster to raise the siege of Rennes, and it would appear that he did not fail to keep his word. Whether he had power to command, or whether the duke's authority in Britanny was independent of the king's representative in Gascony, may be doubtful; but as Lancaster had vowed not to retire till he had seen his standard float upon the walls of Rennes, he evaded the prince's request, and continued the siege, notwithstanding the proclamation of truce. The interference of Edward III. himself was then demanded and obtained; and on the 28th of April the king directed his cousin to raise the siege and withdraw his troops, in terms implying some degree of blame for having neglected to comply with the request of the prince.† The duke still persisted in the siege; and on the 4th of July Edward wrote again in terms of severe reprehension. Before this letter reached the Duke of Lancaster, however, Rennes had capitulated; and the easy terms he granted showed that the English general was well aware that the city was not destined to remain in his possession.‡ He had the gratification, however, of seeing his banner float upon the walls of the city; but the town, having been taken during time of truce, was immediately restored to the party of Charles of Blois; and the duke having kept the letter of his vow, retired and left the place in peace.§

* Froissart, chap. ccclxxvii.

† Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 137. ‡ Lobinau, p. 355.

§ Dom Morice fixes the termination of the siege of Rennes on the 3d of July. The historians of Britanny pass over the capitulation of Rennes as easily as possible, and some even deny that the banner of the captor was displayed upon the walls; but the fact seems beyond all doubt.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DAUPHIN FLIES FROM POITIERS TO PARIS.—CALLS THE STATES GENERAL.—TURBULENT PROCEEDINGS OF THAT ASSEMBLY.—CONDUCT OF STEPHEN MARCEL PREVOT DES MARCHANDS.—LIBERATION OF THE KING OF NAVARRE.—THE GREAT COMPANIES BEGIN TO DEVASTATE FRANCE.—RISE OF THE JACQUERIE, AND CRIMES OF THE INSURGENT PEASANTS.—THE DAY OF MEAUX.—THE DAUPHIN MARCHES UPON PARIS.—STATE OF THE CAPITAL.—THE KING OF NAVARRE TREATS WITH THE DAUPHIN.—DEATH OF THE PREVOT DES MARCHANDS.—SUBMISSION OF THE PARISIANS.

THE events which took place in France during the two years that followed the battle of Poitiers well deserve to be spoken of separately, as amongst them are to be found some of the most terrible, and some of the most instructive, occurrences in the whole range of history. From the fatal field in which, to use the words of an old writer, "the leopard trampled on the *fleur de lis*," the dauphin fled to Paris, where he arrived on the 29th of September;* and there, after taking counsel during a few days with some of his confidential friends, he assumed the title of lieutenant† for his father, and called the States General of the kingdom to assemble in the capital on the 15th of October in the same year.

The prince, doubtless, hoped to receive aid and advice for the representatives of the three estates of the kingdom under the misfortunes which oppressed, and the dangers which menaced them all; but the last place in which to seek that energetic activity which is alone suited to moments of imminent peril and extraordinary exigency is, from the very nature of man, a great national assembly.

The chief practical advantage which has hitherto been derived from the representative form of government—independent of the general satisfaction which all men feel

* Chron. de France, cap. xix.

† His first known act as lieutenant, is dated the 3d of October, 1356.

in participating either immediately or remotely in the formation of the laws which rule them—is the prevention of dangers and evils by the foresight of individuals, and the security obtained by calm deliberation and investigation in every case of national polity. One of the greatest disadvantages, on the contrary, which has thence arisen, has been the want of prompt measures to meet unforeseen events. In a numerous assemblage of persons scarcely a case can arise, scarcely a question can be started, in regard to which folly, ignorance, passion, or prejudice will not find means to impede the schemes of wisdom, and lose the precious moment, even in those cases where but one moment is allowed for action. A representative body, wisely jealous of its power, seldom trusts the executive with sufficient means to meet exigencies with energy, lest the authority so granted should be used against the liberty of the people and the principles of the constitution; and one great desideratum ever has been—perhaps ever will be—to afford to the executive a means of encountering dangers and necessities at once, without freeing it from the control of the deliberative body, or furnishing it with a power against the national freedom.

Such are some of the difficulties of a clearly established and regularly organized representative government; but infinitely greater embarrassments were to be met with in the case of France, where the calling of the States General was irregular and occasional, where the rules were doubtful, the precedents remote, and the representatives themselves either ignorant of their duties or unaccustomed to their exercise. The latent but magnificent destiny of those assemblies, which neither the men who called them nor those who composed them perceived at the time, was to work the gradual progress of national liberty, and to carry on the advance of society from the feudal system to a new order of things. The necessities of the monarchs compelled them to apply to the people; and the people were sure to wring some concession from the necessities of the monarchs. Thus the most unfortunate times were those in which the States General were most frequently called, and those in which national freedom made the greatest progress in France. But at the same time it is to be remarked, that

the States General were far from removing the misfortunes of the epoch in which they assembled. On the contrary, the benefits they produced were for after times, the evils which they wrought for their own. The kings called upon them, in moments of danger and difficulty, for aid and counsel; but instead of supporters they found opponents; instead of advisers they met with inquisitors. The kings came thither to demand assistance; the people to demand rights; and as the people, when assembled, were the most powerful, the exigencies of the state, however pressing, were always postponed to the discussion of popular claims.*

Such was most strikingly the case in the two assemblies of the states called by the dauphin at this period; but as I cannot here pause to consider all their proceedings in detail, I shall merely notice generally the effects of their measures, classing together the two meetings which took place in October, 1356, and February, 1357. During the deliberations of both assemblies their king was a prisoner, their armies were defeated, their finances were exhausted: in Gascony, the Black Prince was stationed at the head of his victorious forces; the Duke of Lancaster was in power in the heart of Britanny;† Calais was in the hands of the

* One great cause of the continual struggle between the monarchical and democratic powers in mixed governments of an irregular character has always been the prerogative of royalty, which rendered the meeting of popular representatives dependent upon the will of the monarch. The people, never knowing how soon they might have another opportunity, if they neglected the one before them, or how long their deliberations would be suffered to continue, if they attended to the exigencies of the state before they stipulated for the concession of their claims, chose the first moment to demand their rights, whether real or imaginary; and instead of the sovereign and the representatives of his people meeting for mutual aid, counsel, and support, they met reciprocally to extort and to resist.

† It must be remembered that at the time of the deliberations of both these assemblies, France and England were still in an actual state of warfare, the truce not having been signed till the 23d March, 1357; and therefore the factious and turbulent proceedings of these assemblies could produce no effect but that of rendering the situation of the kingdom more precarious, the conditions of the truce then under consideration more painful for France, and the demands of England more severe; even if they did not tempt the English monarch to push his advantage, and strive for the complete subjugation of France.

enemy, and a strong body of English adherents were carrying on a petty but successful war in Normandy. Such a situation deserved instant attention, and such evils cried for immediate remedy; but the opportunity of a young and inexperienced ruler, and a shattered executive power, was too favourable to be lost by a people whose voice might be stifled for the next fifty years; and the difficulties and dangers of the moment were postponed, in deliberation, to the consideration of remote advantages, and factious inquiries into the past.* There are always a number of men in all classes ready to lend themselves to the cry of discontent, and to take the chances of tumult in favour of their own ambition. In the present instance, many such were to be found both amongst the nobles, the clergy, and the commons; but the two whose characters stand out from the history of the times, in the most prominent relief, were Stephen Marcel, Prévôt des Marchands, president of the tiers état, and Robert le Coq, Bishop of Laon.† Their first measure, instead of affording any power to the executive to meet the dangers surrounding the state, was to shackle it by every means and in every way; and their first consideration was not of the present so much as of the past. A commission of members, the most strongly opposed to all the king's views, was appointed to control his lieutenant; and the arrest and trial of a number of his ministers and servants‡

* Some important rights were ascertained by these assemblies; but for the general bearing of their proceedings upon the history of society, see Hallam's Middle Ages.

† The measures proposed by Le Coq, and adopted as far as possible by the states, I give in the words of M. de Châteaubriand, who, in his account of these proceedings, is sufficiently correct in his facts:—"He," Le Coq, "cast the whole burden of the public evils upon the flatterers and counsellors who had surrounded King John: he presented a list, proscribing twenty-two persons, and requiring that they should be put upon their trial; he proposed the formation of a commission, drawn from amongst the states, to superintend the different branches of administration; and, lastly, he demanded that Charles should be deprived of the power of taking any measure without the consent of a council chosen from amongst the deputies. The bishop terminated his speech by requiring the liberation of the King of Navarre." Châteaubriand, Analyse Raisonnée, Etudes, vol. iv. p. 170.

‡ Chron. de France, chap. xx.

was ordered, instead of any proceeding tending to his release.* The foundation of established rule was shaken; and with it, as a consequence, the very fabric of society itself. The discussion of theoretical questions, which at first was calm, however unseasonable or even detrimental, soon and naturally deviated into factious violence, anarchy, and confusion. The people yielded themselves blindly to turbulent demagogues; the dauphin saw himself unsupported in the midst of a scene of uproar and tumult; the traitorous Prévôt des Marchands snatched the power which had been wrung from legitimate authority; massacre and violence stained the streets of Paris with the blood of her citizens; and several of his most gallant officers were slain in the palace and the presence of the prince;† while, at the same time, to complete the whole, the infamous King of Navarre, issuing from prison by the aid and countenance‡ of Stephen Marcel, brought almost every crime that can disgrace humanity to act its part in the horrors of the French capital. Paris now became a scene of democratic anarchy; general law, public order, and private security, were all banished; the King of Navarre harangued the people in one quarter of the town, and by his seducing eloquence won all hearts;§ Marcel in another place addressed the multitude,‖ and by his vehement energy worked them up to fury, while the

* The Chancellor, Archbishop of Rouen, was amongst the number accused, together with the first President of the Parliament of Paris, the Master of the Mint, the king's Private Treasurer, his Maître d'Hôtel, the Treasurer of State, and the Treasurer at War.

† Robert de Clermont, Marshal of Normandy, and the Lord of Conflans, Marshal of Champagne, were killed by the adherents of Stephen Marcel, in the end of February, 1358, in the presence of Charles Duke of Normandy, and so near to his person that his robe was stained with their blood. His own life was in danger, according to Froissart, and was only saved by some one giving him one of the party-coloured hoods which were the badge of the faction of Marcel. Dacy, Advocate General, was slain in the shop of a pastry-cook; but this event took place after the liberation of the King of Navarre.

‡ The King of Navarre was liberated by one of the nobles named de Piquigny, a worthy co-labourer with Marcel and Le Coq, on the night of the 8th of November, 1357.

§ Froissart, chap. ccclxxxiv.

‖ Chron. de St. Denis, chap. xl.

dauphin again spoke to them in milder terms, and persuaded them to tranquillity, with that early prudence which afterwards gained him the name of Wise.

The party of Marcel, however, continually increased, especially while the nobles continued either dispersed over the country lamenting the rout of Poitiers, or only assembled in the capital to swell the factions which tore their country. But events were preparing, which, while they showed the fearful state of anarchy into which France had fallen, the want of all general power, and the absence of everything like police, tended in some degree, by the powerful impulse of common danger, to produce union amongst the higher orders of society.

Shortly after the battle of Poitiers, Godfrey de Harcourt, one of the chief adherents of the house of Navarre,* a strenuous favourer of Edward of England, and a pertinacious traitor both to his country and his king, had been killed in a skirmish in Normandy by a party of the dauphin's troops commanded by Robert de Clermont, marshal of the duchy; but that event did not in any degree quiet Normandy, in which the faction of Navarre still appeared in arms. Far more dangerous than that faction, however, to the tranquillity and to the prosperity of France were those bodies of brigands which we have already mentioned, and which were multiplying every day under the command of various adventurous knights, whom the truce threw out of the only employment to which they were competent. The chief leader of these plunderers, in Normandy, was the famous English captain, Robert Knolles, who, at the head of a large body of free companions, varying in number from eight hundred to two or three thousand, kept every town and fortress throughout the province in a continual state of alarm and anxiety. But no part of France was exempt from the presence of such licentious bands. Griffiths,† a Welshman, commanding an immense force of light armed

* November, 1356.

† Froissart calls this plunderer Ruffin; but Barnes, who gives him the name of Griffiths, was, in all probability, right. He appears to have been a man of great courage and considerable skill in war; but by Froissart's account did not receive the honour of knighthood till he had taken up the trade of brigand.

troops of all nations, ravaged the whole country between the Seine and Loire, and plundered towns and villages to the very gates of Paris. Nor did foreign soldiers alone thus desolate the fair face of France. A multitude of the French themselves, finding that the state was powerless to restrain them, collected together in large bodies, and, without regard to party, or nation, or circumstances, plundered all alike. The principal French leader whom we hear of in this mixed capacity of soldier and robber was a distinguished knight named Regnault de Cervolles,* commonly called the Archpriest, who had fought gallantly at Poitiers, and had, after the battle, collected from the scattered troops of France, and the bands of German mercenaries, a sufficient force of free companions to put the south-eastern provinces completely at his disposal. With these he marched into Provence, captured cities and fortresses, carried off immense wealth, entered the Venaissin, approached Avignon; and having dined, somewhat forcibly, with the pope, he laid both the pontiff and the College of Cardinals under contribution.†

Not a province existed throughout France which did not groan under the presence of one of these predatory armies; and while confusion and disorganization reigned in the capital, commerce, happiness, and tranquillity had disappeared from the country. From this state of things a worse was still to arise. The dauphin, discontented with the States General, who, instead of aiding to remove difficulties, had only given birth to new evils, dissolved the assembly; and the individuals of whom it had been composed returned to their homes, the nobles more disunited, and the commons far more turbulent than when they had met. The disunion and turbulence soon spread to the

* He is sometimes called Arnold, sometimes Regnault de Cervolles, and took his title of Archpriest from a family benefice at Vergne. Baluzius and others fix the date of Cervolles' entrance into the Venaissin and his exactions from the pope in 1357. But D. Vaissette throws great doubt over all the transactions in which the archpriest was engaged, especially as to whether he had any share in the taking of Pont St. Esprit in 1360. See the introductory observations.

† Baluzius, tom. i. p. 351.

provinces; and the usual consequence of a struggle for authority between two orders in the state now took place. The nobles, the clergy, and the communes had made or suffered an attack upon the previous power of the crown; and the lowest class of all rose in turn to attack the rank above itself.

A variety of causes combined to rouse that grade of men called villains, or serfs, to seize the present moment, in order to throw off the odious bondage under which they had hitherto groaned. It were endless to count the oppressions exercised by many of the feudal nobility, and endless indeed to point out oppressions which they might exercise if they chose. Those oppressions had rendered a number of them most justly detested; and the envy which human beings, especially in a state of ignorance and brutality, feel towards those above them in worldly station, had rendered that detestation, which was well merited by many of the nobles, general against the whole class. Bred up in habitual fear of their lords, however, the peasants would have been long ere they rose against them, had not the flight of many of those oppressors from the field of Poitiers, and their general division amongst themselves, diminished the awe, and added a degree of new contempt to long cherished hatred. At the same time many of the communes and free artisans, enjoying privileges far above the serfs, laboured to spread discontent amongst them, and identified themselves with them. The scourge of the adventurers and free companions drove the peasants to despair; and while no power existed in the state either to ameliorate their condition or to repress their rising, misery, oppression and insult rendered life valueless, so that a general insurrection was the consequence.

We must not mistake, however, and attribute to the whole mass of the faction known by the name of the Jacquerie those rational motives which certainly influenced a part. Nor must we suppose that such motives, even with

* We find from the Chronique de France (chap. lxxvii.) that a number of the people of Paris and other towns, of better condition, joined the Jacques besieging Meaux. Froissart also gives the same account (chap. ccclxxxvii.).

those who felt them, acted at all in the same manner as they would do upon any European peasant of the present day. Far from it. Reasonable motives were only known to a very few, who led the rest; and reasonable objects, perhaps, to none. We find that nine out of ten of the serfs who were taken in revolt could assign no reason for their rising, but declared that the only cause which led them individually to commit the crimes they did commit, was that they saw others do so,*—a principle of action which every page in history shows to be stronger than any other with ignorant men.† In regard to those who acted upon a keen sense of human degradation in their own persons, and utter carelessness of life from the deprivation of all that makes life dear, we perceive the darkness of the age in the fact that they sought revenge, not liberty. Had they done otherwise, had they acted the noble part which the communes at a former period acted against the nobles, and made their aim emancipation, emancipation they would have obtained, and no moment could have been more fovourable to seek it than that which they chose; but the moral darkness of their condition, which prevented them from seeking liberty as the great good, rendered them unfit to use it; and the enormities which they committed showed that the time was far, far distant for that change in society which extended the blessing of freedom to all. Every action, every principle, every movement of the revolted peasants, evinced that they were incapable of

* Froissart, chap. ccclxxxvi.

† It would appear that the knowledge of crime, and the familiarization of the mind of man therewith, has a much greater tendency to produce and to increase crime than the example of virtue has to counteract vice; for evil always meets with such able advocates in the human passions, that the pleadings of virtue are seldom heard till too late. The contagious nature of evil actions will account for many of those seeming madnesses which sometimes seize upon large bodies of men, and even upon nations. There can be little doubt now that nine out of ten of the acts of incendiarism which have disgraced France and England in an enlightened age proceed from no combination, political or otherwise, but simply from the contagion of example, together with the facility of perpetration. Indeed the confessions of the unhappy criminals themselves have in most cases borne out this view of the case.

wielding liberty, though the fearful barbarism of their state must be imputed to them rather as a misfortune than a fault.*

The first rise of the Jacquerie took place in May, 1358, by which time the state of the country had arrived at such a pitch of confusion, that the inhabitants of each village were obliged to fortify the ends of their streets, and keep watch and ward as in a city: the proprietors of lands on the banks of large rivers spent the night in boats moored in the midst of the stream; and the high roads throughout the land, scarcely traceable amongst grass and weeds, attested the interruption of all ordinary communication, and the general disorganization of society.† While this melancholy state continued, a handful of peasants in the neighbourhood of St. Leu† and Clermont, in Beauvoisis, not amounting in the whole to a hundred men,‡ met for the ostensible purpose of bewailing their fate. From lamentations they proceeded to murmurs, and from murmurs to outrage. Rude orators started up amongst them; and declaring that the knights and gentlemen were the causes of all the misery they suffered, the betrayers of their country, and the destroyers of the state, they found ready listeners and prompt instruments; and the assemblage, with one consent, declared

* The insurrection called the Jacquerie has been looked upon as an effort on the part of the peasantry to obtain their rightful liberty—that liberty which, however long it had been withheld from them, was their due by the law of nature and of God. Nevertheless, it is but right to state, that not only were they in general unfitted for either a just appreciation or a right exercise of freedom, by the state of brutal ignorance and both moral and intellectual darkness in which they had been kept, but also that no contemporary record that I have met with assigns the desire of emancipation to have been their motive, or liberty their object. Froissart declares that they determined to destroy the nobles, because the nobles dishonoured and betrayed France (chap. ccclxxxv.); and the continuator of Nangis, in the Spicelegium of Achery (tom. iii. p. 119), speaks solely of revenge upon the nobles who oppressed them, as the object of their rising. The word liberty is never mentioned; and although of course it would have been obtained by the peasants had they been successful, yet it might be doubted whether it ever presented itself to their imaginations as a definite object at the time of their insurrection.

† Spicelegium, tom. iii. p. 119.

‡ Froissart, chap. ccclxxxv.

that they would put to death all the gentlemen in the land. The cry spread throughout the country; village after village took it up; the serfs poured forth armed with pikes; a number of the more discontented commons of the towns joined them; and taking the title of Jacques, from the name "Jacques bonhomme," which the nobles had been accustomed to apply to them, they proceeded in large bodies through the country, with a determination to slaughter all the gentry without discrimination.

Their first success was in an attack upon one of the fortified houses of the time, which they broke into, slew the knight to whom it belonged, and massacred his wife and children of all ages. Still, as they proceeded, their numbers increased, and one crime quickly brought on others of a deeper die. Women were violated before their husbands, their children, or their fathers, and slaughtered by their side. Fire, plunder, and massacre swept some of the fairest regions of France; castles were stormed and taken; palaces and houses were levelled with the ground; and at every step some new and fiendish cruelty was invented by the revolted peasantry. A single instance may suffice. Almost all the respectable classes fled before their approach; but in one of the castles taken not far from Clermont they found a gentleman of the country, with his wife and several young children. The knight was instantly slain; and after having committed the most horrid excesses on the person of the unhappy lady, they roasted the body of her dead husband, and endeavoured to force her and her children to eat the flesh.* They ended with an act of mercy—the death of all; and having burned the castle to the ground, proceeded to commit new crimes in the country before them.

The insurrection now spread in every direction; and under the leading of one of the most infamous of the degraded monsters,† who blackened their cause, by rendering their existence a tissue of brutal horrors, their proceedings assumed a greater degree of importance, and threatened the

* Froissart, chap. ccclxxxv.

† His name was William Caillet; and Monsieur de Châteaubriand says that "he was nevertheless a hero." Monsieur de Châteaubriand's conception of a hero is different from my own.

very being of society in France. Against the female sex in general their detestable hatred seems to have been excited; and it is impossible to furnish a sufficient picture of the strange and awful mingling of animal appetite and ferocious cruelty which their conduct displayed. The fall of a great body of nobles at Cressy and Poitiers, together with the imprisonment of a multitude in England, had left the ladies of France almost unprotected; and while the Jacques, separated into several bodies, marched on through the Beauvoisis, Soissonois, and Vermandois, a number of unprotected women of the highest families in France fled to Meaux, only guarded by the young Duke of Orleans, and a mere handful of men-at-arms. By this time, however, several bodies of the nobility were moving against the Jacques, though the great inferiority of their numbers would have rendered the efforts of the knights perfectly unavailing, had their adversaries possessed the slightest military knowledge. Caillet, their principal leader, was slain near Clermont, with 3,000 of his companions, by the King of Navarre;* and a great many detached bodies were cut to pieces in the fields.

But the principal torrent was now flowing towards Meaux; and the tidings that the young Duchess of Normandy, the Duchess of Orleans, and near 300 ladies had sought refuge in that town, drew all the bands of revolted serfs from the countries round about, as well as multitudes from Paris and other towns, filled with every fearful passion that can brutalize humanity. Meaux itself might have been defended; but it was unhappily found by the Duke of Orleans and his fair companions, after they had taken refuge within its walls, that the inhabitants were amongst the most discontented of the communes, and the strongest partisans of the Jacquerie.† Under these circumstances, he retreated to the town-house and a market-place, defended by the river Marne, which flows through the middle of the city; and here the whole party awaited their fate in trem-

* Chronique de France, chapter lxxviii. Froissart, chapter ccclxxxvi.

† Froissart, chap. ccclxxxviii.

bling expectation; while the insurgents only delayed the attack till greater numbers arrived.

It happened, however, that two gallant knights, one attached to France and one to England, were returning together from a campaign in Prussia, which they had been making as fellow-soldiers during the truce that had supervened between their respective countries. These were the princely Count de Foix, the head of a house fertile in noble names, and the famous Captal de Buch knight of the garter, and one of the most gallant officers in the armies of the Black Prince. Journeying leisurely homeward, accompanied only by forty men-at-arms, they first heard of the horrors of the Jacquerie, and the danger of the ladies of France, when they arrived at Chalons in Champagne; and without a moment's hesitation, they gave their banners to the wind, and marching forward, effected their entrance into Meaux.*

Their arrival spread gladness amongst the fair refugees; but that gladness was of very short duration; for the overwhelming numbers of the insurgents which poured down upon the city seemed to render all hope of defence vain. The inhabitants of Meaux threw open their gates to the enemy; and the market-place itself was soon besieged by the Jacques of Brie,† while a large body from Paris, under the command of a brutal grocer, called Pierre Gille, followed, to swell the ranks of the assailants.‡ Every hour their numbers increased; and the only alternative left for the choice of the three nobles who commanded in Meaux was to pause and run the risk of the market-place being stormed by the immense multitude without, or to strike one daring blow for deliverance. Their determination was soon taken; and drawing up their men in order, with the banners of the Duke of Orleans and the Count de Foix and the pennon of the captal displayed, they ordered the gates

* The siege of Meaux by the Jacques must have continued some time, as the distance from Chalons to that place is at least eighty miles; and the march of the captal and the Count de Foix must have occupied two days.

† Chron. de France, chap. lxxvii.

‡ To him was joined a man named Vaillant, who had h[illegible] some office under the government.

to be thrown open, and with levelled lances rode out upon the serfs.

Nothing had been heard before, amongst the leaders of the Jacquerie, but menaces and imprecations. The sight of the men-at-arms, however, abated the courage, and their advance shook the ranks, of the ill-disciplined peasants; some attempted to fly; the nobles pursued; the villains overthrew and trampled on each other; and in a few minutes the whole was a scene of slaughter and confusion. The insurgents fled in every direction; but, jammed up in the narrow streets of a small and confined town, the one impeded the other; and, while the unsparing swords, and the heavy horses of the men-at-arms, mowed or trampled them down by hundreds, their own terror and haste were more destructive than the enemy. At length, issuing out into the fields, a part of the Jacques escaped; but not before 7000 of their number had fallen, under the blows of a handful of men who could scarcely be seen manœuvring in the plains round Meaux.

The knights ceased not the pursuit and slaughter till they were compelled by mere weariness; and then returning to the city, they bore the glad tidings of their extraordinary victory to the ladies they had left within its dangerous walls.*

That single day may be said to have put an end to the Jacquerie. Scarcely a peasant appeared in arms after the rout of Meaux; and the conduct of the burghers of that town, in admitting the murderous bands within its walls,† was punished by the destruction of the greater part of the city, which was burned to the ground by the victorious leaders.‡ Thus ended the insurrection of the peasantry—an insurrection for which there was, unhappily, great cause.

* The defeat of the insurgent peasantry at Meaux took place on the 9th of June, 1358.

† Froissart, chaps. ccclxxxvii. ccclxxxviii. Secousse, tom i. p. 211.

‡ From one or two expressions in the contemporary accounts there is reason to believe that the victors carried their vengeance to a most brutal excess; and, cooping up a number of the insurgant burghers in the walls, burned them alive in the flames of the city. See Froissart, chap. ccclxxxviii.

Centuries of civilization, however, were wanting to render such a movement even hopeful; and the horrid crimes which the insurgents committed, though it did not justify the state of degradation to which the rural population was again generally reduced, justified many of the severe measures taken against the individuals who had participated in the rising.

Amongst the circumstances which, by preventing any vigorous measures of repression, had enabled the revolted serfs to carry on their ravages so long and so successfully, I have mentioned the state of the French capital, the power of the Prévôt des Marchands, and the faction of the King of Navarre. The Prévôt Marcel was very willing to become the Artevelde of Paris; but feeling the necessity of some support, he had, as we have seen,* either contrived or effected the liberation of the King of Navarre; and when once that prince was free, his talents, his eloquence, his popularity, and his daring villany, rendered his alliance necessary to the demagogue of the capital. Charles the Bad, in whose eyes vows and treaties were but empty air and meaningless parchment, readily bound himself to Marcel: and Paris, which had long been a dangerous abode for the regent, became totally untenable. He had accordingly quitted the city on the 26th of March, 1358; had once more called the states at Compiegne, and obtained some assistance; and passing through several of the eastern provinces during the height of the Jacquerie,† had gathered together an army of 30,000 men-at-arms, and marched towards Charenton, for the purpose of reducing the capital to obedience.‡

In the mean time Marcel showed all that activity and foresight without which a demagogue cannot exist an hour. He raised troops, he carried on, with surprising rapidity, the fortifications of Paris, which had been begun by the dauphin in 1356,§ and he induced the populace to elect the

* 8th Nov. 1357.

† Chron. de France, chap. lxxxii.

‡ 30th June, 1358.

§ Froissart, Barres, and many other writers assert that these fortifications were begun by Stephen Marcel; but this is erroneous, as may be seen by examining Felibien, vol. i. p. 635, and the Spicelegium, tom. [illegible] 115.

King of Navarre captain of the city.* That prince, however, only regarded Marcel as his tool, and looked upon the revolt of the capital, the anarchy of the country, and the difficulties of the dauphin, as the means of extracting, from the youth and inexperience of the Duke of Normandy, the concessions at which he had constantly aimed. He willingly undertook the office assigned him, levied troops on his part, received the money of the Parisians, and took into his pay a considerable body of English free companions, who, at the time, were plundering the country in the neighbourhood.

In the mean time the dauphin approached within a short distance of Paris, and his parties foraged to the very gates. A number of the inhabitants took the alarm; a large proportion of the better classes desired submission and tranquillity; and the King of Navarre, seeing that the power of the Prévôt, though yet sufficiently strong to hold out the city against the dauphin, was rapidly declining, marched his troops out of Paris,† and took up a position between St. Denis and St. Cloud. Here, by the intervention‡ of Joan, the Queen-dowager, he negotiated a peace with the Duke of Normandy,§ by which, we are assured, he agreed to yield to their fate the Prevôt and twelve of the most obnoxious burghers; and yet, such were his powers of dissimulation, that he evidently persuaded the factious party in the city, he was as strongly attached to their interest as ever.

The outrages committed at this time by the English attached to his party excited the indignation of the Parisians, and in a chance tumult, in the capital, a number of the free companions were slain, and a number more imprisoned: those who had met with the latter fate were boldly

* 15th June. Chron. de France, chap. lxxix.

† Froissart, chaps. ccclxxxix. cccxc.

‡ It would appear that the first conference in regard to a peace between the King of Navarre and the Dauphin Duke of Normandy was held on the 8th of July, without the presence of the queen-dowager; but that these first negotiations having proved ineffectual, Joan conducted the others in person, on the 1[illegible]th of July following.

§ Chron. de France, chap. lxxxvi.

rescued by Marcel, who conducted them in safety out of the city, accompanied by a number of archers and men-at-arms.* This conduct, however, brought on such dangerous murmurs on the part of the people, that Marcel and the King of Navarre were obliged to counterfeit enmity to the English bands, and to place themselves at the head of a body of armed Parisians, who marched forth to attack the adventurers. These leaders of the valorous citizens only served to conduct them into an ambush, laid by the English in the Bois de Boulogne; and there more than 600 of the Parisians were slain, while the King of Navarre sat looking on amused, and Marcel covered his treachery but by a thin disguise.†

The situation of the Prévôt had nevertheless become, by this time, perilous in the extreme. A strong party was formed against him in Paris itself: the Regent positively refused to receive the submission of the capital on any terms which did not imply that Marcel should be given up to justice; and the King of Navarre was apparently falling off from his alliance. In this situation the Prévôt and his comrades devised one of the basest schemes of treason that the records of Europe afford. He entered into a new treaty with the treacherous King of Navarre, by which he stipulated to deliver the city into the hands of that prince during the night. Every one within the walls, except the partisans of the Prévôt, whose houses were marked, were to be put to the sword indiscriminately; and the crown of France was to fall upon the head of the sovereign of Navarre.‡

* Chron. de France, chap, lxxxviii.

† Chron. de France, chap. lxxxviii. Froissart, chap. ccexcii. The Chronicles of France place this defeat of the Parisians on the 22d of July, and the liberation of the English prisoners, mentioned above, on the 27th. In examining all the circumstances I have stated it differently, as will be seen in the text, believing the liberation of the prisoners to have taken place first; as it is by no means probable that two or three hundred English free companions should be permitted to remain in debauchery in Paris, while the Parisians were fighting against and suffering defeats from their comrades at the very gates of the town.

‡ Monsieur de Secousse has defended, in his Life of Charles of Navarre, the principal particulars of the account of this transaction given by Matteo Villani, who implies that a similar treaty

The perpetration of such an egregious crime was luckily prevented. Pepin des Essarts and John de Charny, two of the leaders of the royalist party in Paris, became aware, by some means, of the design, within a few minutes of the time appointed for its execution; and, arming themselves instantly, they rushed to the houses of the chief conspirators with as many followers as they could collect. They found all empty however, Marcel and his companions having already gone to the gates. No time was to be lost under these circumstances; and, passing by the Hôtel de Ville, the two knights possessed themselves of the royal banner, and unfurling it before them, called all men to arms. They thus proceeded to the Porte St. Antoine, which Marcel was at that very moment opening in order to give admission to the Navarrese. When he heard the shouts, he would fain have retreated, and endeavoured to escape into the Bastille; but before he could accomplish his purpose his adversaries were upon him; and in a severe and sanguinary struggle which ensued between the two parties, Stephen Marcel was struck to the ground by John de Charny,* who slew him on the steps of the tower by repeated blows of his battle-axe. Almost all the immediate companions of the Prévôt died with him, except Jean

was at the same time entered into directly with Edward III, of England, by which the English monarch covenanted to support the Navarrese prince in his usurpation of the throne of France, on consideration of homage to England, and certain territorial concessions. The historian of Charles the Bad fancies that he has discovered the very treaty between Edward and Charles in Rymer, only altering the date of the year, in regard to which he conceives Rymer to be in error. That Rymer was sometimes mistaken is beyond doubt; but even if we suppose that he was so in the present instance, the assertion of Villani, as well as that of Secousse, is perfectly incompatible with known facts. See note at the end of the chapter.

* The ordinary editions of Froissart, as well as the Chronicles of France, attribute the deliverance of Paris and the death of Marcel to the burgher named Jean Maillart. It would require too much space to give even a sketch of the motives which induced Monsieur Dacier to adopt the reading of a different MS of Froissart; but in regard to the facts above related, they are detailed circumstantially in the letters patent of Charles V. of France in favour of Des Essarts, dated February 7th, 1368, which perfectly confirm the text of Froissart, preferred by Monsieur Dacier.

Maillart, who had joined the partisans of the dauphin, on discovering the extent of Marcel's treason. A number of others were arrested; some suffered for their crimes; and the inhabitants of Paris, in general, willingly agreed to throw open their gates to the Duke of Normandy,* and welcomed with joy the prospect of tranquillity."

* The dauphin entered Paris on the 3d of August.

The chronological order of those events, the dates of which are known, are as follows:—

1358. June.	The King of Navarre defeated the Jacques near Clermont.
15th June.	Was appointed Captain of Paris.
30th June.	The Duke of Normandy advanced to Charenton.
8th July.	Conferences for peace between the Dauphin and King of Navarre.
11th July.	Conferences renewed under the mediation of the Queen-dowager.
19th July.	Treaty of peace signed between the Dauphin and King of Navarre, by which the Parisians were given up to the mercy of the Dauphin, with the sole condition that he should be guided towards them by the counsel of the Queen-dowager, the King of Navarre, the Duke of Orleans, and the Count d'Etampes.
22d July.	Tumult in Paris, and some English free companions killed.
July.	The Parisians attack the English, and are defeated.
31st July.	The Prevôt des Marchands killed.
3d August.	The Duke of Normandy enters Paris.

Now to whatever year the treaty mentioned by Monsieur de Secousse, and reported by Rymer, is referable, there can be no doubt in regard to the date being the 1st of August. It bears upon its face that it was drawn up by plenipotentiaries; and the time required for the first overtures, for the nomination of envoys, and for the discussion of various clauses, must have been considerable, as well as that occupied in the journeys to and from England, which were not then performed in six-and-thirty hours. Whoever considers these facts, and looks to the chronological series of events above, the negotiations of the King of Navarre with the Dauphin, and the fact that any treaty bearing date the 1st of August must have been signed after Marcel was dead and the capital had returned to obedience, will see that it is impossible the treaty in Rymer can bear out the account of Villani. The suppositions of M. de Secousse are too great to be followed by any unprejudiced person. He supposes the treaty to have been misdated by Rymer; he supposes it to appertain properly to the year 1358, instead of 1351; he supposes it to be the same which is

CHAPTER XII.

STATE OF KING JOHN'S IMPRISONMENT.—CONDUCT OF THE STATES OF LANGUEDOC.—FAMINE AND OTHER EVILS AFFLICTING FRANCE.—WAR RENEWED BETWEEN THE DAUPHIN AND THE KING OF NAVARRE.—THE KING OF NAVARRE SUPPORTED BY THE ENGLISH COMPANIONS.—PRIVATE TREATY BETWEEN KING EDWARD AND KING JOHN.—REJECTED BY THE STATES GENERAL.—TOURNAMENT GIVEN BY THE LORD MAYOR AND CITIZENS OF LONDON.—EDWARD PREPARES TO RENEW THE WAR.

Very few occurrences of any import took place in England during the early part of the two years' truce which succeeded the capture of the King of France. The captivity of that monarch was rendered as light as captivity ever can be; and though he was removed from London to the castle of Hertford, and thence to Somerton*—though we find that he was guarded with great care, and that his safe custody was made an especial point of injunction to the governors of the places assigned for his dwelling, yet every attention to his comfort and convenience is manifest throughout the state papers referring to the years of his imprisonment. Even were this not the case, and did no authentic documents exist to prove the facts, the great regard that John continued to entertain for Edward and his sons

mentioned by Villani and the continuator of Nangis, both of whom state the principal clauses of the treaty to have been exactly the reverse of those which this treaty contains—especially in regard to the main point, of who was to be king of France—the treaty bearing Edward III., the historians naming the King of Navarre. I have mentioned the treaty where I found it in Rymer, under the year 1351, without feeling at all sure that such is the right date. If there be any truth at all in the assertion, that a treaty was entered into between the English and Navarrese about this time, 1358, it must have been simply between the King of Navarre and some of the leaders of the adventurous bands which he had taken into his service, without any real authority from the King of England.

* Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 183.

from the time of his capture, the terms of affection in which he spoke of them after his liberation, and the highly commendatory language used by Gasse de la Bigne,* in a poem composed by order of John himself, would be sufficient to prove the princely generosity of Edward's conduct towards his captive rival.

Free liberty to hunt and hawk seems to have been allowed to the French king and his court; and we find that he was always considered as a guest at the great military spectacles given from time to time by the English monarch.†

The most splendid of these assemblies which took place during the captivity of King John, and perhaps the most splendid which England ever saw, was held at Windsor, on the 23d of April, 1358, in honour of St. George.‡ Princes, nobles, and knights flocked thither from all parts of the world, and were received with a pomp and display, which called from King John the observation, in reference to the high ransom demanded for his own liberation,§ that he never yet knew such royal shows and feastings without some after-reckoning for gold and silver.

During the course of the same year, David Bruce, with his queen Johanna, and a large body of Scottish gentlemen, came to the court of the English monarch as a guest, and shared for several months in the festivities which then

* Ste. Palaye, Mem. sur l'ancienne Chévalrie, tom. ii. p. 190.

† It has seemed necessary to say thus much, because some of the French writers have attempted to prove that John's imprisonment was harsh and severe. Every authentic document, however, that can be discovered, as well as every reasonable inference from the king's own conduct, tends to show that his captivity was even far more lenient than would have been consistent with his safe custody, had not the French monarch himself been the soul of chivalrous honour, and the upright nobility of his own true heart afforded better security than bonds. The words which Froissart attributes to him when addressing the States at Amiens, are sufficient to show what had been Edward's conduct to his prisoner: "Il répondoit à ce et disoit qu'il avoit trouvé au Roi d'Angleterre son frere, en la reine et en leurs enfans ses neveux, tant de loyauté, d'honneur et de courtoisie, qu'il ne s'en pouvoit trop louer et que rien ne se doutoit d'eux." Chap. ccccxxix.

‡ Knighton, col. 2617.

§ Acta Edwardi III.—Ed. III., by Barnes, p. 536.

reigned in London. By the intercession of his queen, also, the King of Scotland obtained from her brother Edward III. a delay in regard to the payment of his ransom;* and we are told, though on somewhat doubtful authority, that he agreed to serve, on the part of England, in those wars which were now apparently about to be renewed.†

The state of this island at that time offered a most extraordinary contrast to the condition of France. Instead of anarchy, confusion, and bloodshed, together with famine, the never-ceasing follower of turbulence and disorder, the dominions of the English king displayed a scene of peace, regularity, wealth, and happiness, such as nations unhappily too seldom know. Nor is it unworthy of remark, that the only portion of France which enjoyed internal tranquillity, which was little if at all affected by the famine that desolated the rest,‡ and which maintained a dignified station in the eyes of the nations round about, was Languedoc, the states of which district, meeting apart from the northern states, had after the battle of Poitiers pursued a totally opposite policy. Instead of taking an unworthy advantage of the distressed state of the country to devise grievances or to extort concessions, the states of Languedoc applied themselves at once to consider the dangers of the kingdom, voted means for its defence, and extraordinary supplies for the extraordinary necessities of the times.§

Did we not know that faction has the power of swallowing up reason, honour, and virtue, and of even blinding

* Rymer, tom. iii. part i. pp. 171, 178.

† Barnes, p. 519.

‡ The famine which at this time spread over the greater part of France was so severe, that many hundreds of the lower orders died of want. Froissart relates that a barrel of herrings was commonly sold for thirty crowns; and if, as he declares, every other article of food was proportionately dear, it is scarcely possible to conceive how even the middle ranks could procure the means of subsistence.

§ Amongst other things, the states determined that eleven thousand men should be raised at their expense for the defence of the country; that no man should wear any of the dearer sorts of fur then commonly in use for trimming mantles, &c.; that ornaments of gold and jewels should generally be laid aside; and that all ordinary festivities should cease, till the deliverance of the king was accomplished. D. Vaissette, vol. iv. p. 289, 290.

keen-sighted self-interest itself, we might wonder that the estates of the northern divisions of France did not act in the same manner, if not from generosity and patriotism, at least from an equal sense of the general danger. When it is considered that their turbulence and civil contentions laid the very heart of the country open to a powerful, an enterprising, and a triumphant enemy, that at the very time of their keenest civil strife* the hands of that enemy were free to act against them, were unbound by any treaty—unshackled by any truce—that he maintained a title to the throne they left undefended, and had twice swept with victorious arms the land they now exposed to invasion, it may well be a matter of astonishment that the French afforded such facilities to their foe, and not less so that Edward did not take advantage of the opportunity.

What were the motives which restrained the King of England from pursuing the warfare which he had so long waged, at the moment when success seemed within his very grasp, must ever remain in doubt. Whether he ever really desired to add the crown of France to that of England,—whether he doubted that the two could be united with security to either,—whether he believed that the difficulties of possessing would be greater than even those of acquiring the throne of France,—or whether the moderation of maturer years, and a juster estimation of the blessings of tranquillity, caused him in the prime of his days to let slip from his grasp the object of his youthful ambition, who shall take upon him to say? Certain it is that, with his victorious son commanding a powerful army in Guyenne, with his unconquered cousin the Duke of Lancaster leading large forces in Britanny, with a powerful army in England, which he himself had lately led both into France and into Scotland, with his own country glowing with triumph and rich with the spoils of the enemy, he neglected to pursue his long cherished schemes of aggrandisement against France, though her armies were scattered to the wind, her finances exhausted, her peasantry in rebellion, her nobles torn with civil contention, her capital rolling in anarchy and blood, her fields and fortresses in possession of roving

* For six months after the battle of Poitiers.

bands of his own subjects, her princes children, and her king a prisoner.

Such, however, was the case; and Edward, whose arms had been so successful, now seemed to limit himself to the power of negotiation, while endeavouring to extract the greatest advantages from his favourable position. The northern portion of France wasted time and treasure and blood and energy in factious turbulence and civil strife, and the children of the monarch as well as his subjects seemed to bestir themselves but little to hasten his return; but the states of Languedoc interested themselves deeply and strenuously in the deliverance of King John. During the whole time of his detention in England, negotiations were going on in regard to his ransom; but Edward III., though treating his prisoner with all possible gentleness, knew too well the power he had acquired by the possession of his person to liberate him without exacting far greater advantages than could be derived from any sum of money. At the same time John became more and more weary each successive day of his captivity in a foreign land; and the dreadful scene of anarchy and confusion which his kingdom presented during his absence increased his desire to return, and to strive for the restoration of order. The pope also failed not to interest himself in the state of France, and to urge the dauphin to exertion in order to liberate his father; while at the same time he pressed upon Edward, with every argument that Christian charity could suggest, the glory of generosity and the policy of moderation.

The dauphin, however, had no sooner taken peaceable possession of the capital, after the death of Marcel, than he was once more embroiled in hostilities with the King of Navarre;* and it is supposed that Edward III., notwithstanding the existing truce, encouraged the factions which agitated France, and aided the party of the Navarrese prince, if not by active assistance, at least by passive acquiescence in the strong support which he derived from the various bands of English adventurers who had joined

* The King of Navarre declared war against the dauphin on the very day on which that prince returned to Paris, i. e. the 3d of August.

his forces, and who kept him upon an equality with the dauphin. Policy, indeed, bound Edward to do more than, by equalizing the parties, and increasing the difficulties of the government, to render the return of the king, at any price, necessary to the welfare of the state, though at the same time he might not regret to see France reduced to a state of weakness which would prevent her for many years from competing with the prosperous kingdom over which he ruled.

Whether Edward did really give this encouragement to the King of Navarre is by no means clearly proved; but his flagrant evasion of the former treaty in regard to Britanny justifies after-suspicion: nor is it probable that Edward's orders would have been disobeyed by any of his subjects in France, had he ever seriously commanded them to desist from aiding either party. Nevertheless, it is certain that the faction of the King of Navarre was supported almost entirely by natives of England, or by adherents of the English king. Nor did these auxiliaries alone consist of those adventurous bands which paid little respect to any government: but we find some of the noblest of Edward's officers openly siding with the Navarrese; as instances of which fact, the names of the Captal de Buch,* the Lord Peter Audley, and Sir Eustace d'Ambrecicourt may be cited.†

During the whole of July, even while treating with the regent, the King of Navarre had been striving, by various means, to increase his forces; and in the beginning of August, 1358, finding himself sufficiently strong to keep the field against the dauphin, he affected high indignation at the death of the Prévôt of Paris and his fellow-traitors,

* I am very doubtful in regard to the fact of the Captal de Buch having joined the party of the King of Navarre before the expiration of the truce. The assertion of Froissart, however, is positive, that the capital captured the town of Clermont for the Navarrese prince in 1358; and he is so circumstantial in his account, fixing the fall of Clermont so clearly in that year by a number of other events, that I have not taken upon myself to reject his authority on this point, though the chronicles of France place the surprise of Clermont by the captal in the year 1359, after the war had been renewed between England and France.

† Froissart, chap. ccccxiv. cccxcix. Barnes, pp. 548, 555.

and boldly declared war against the Duke of Normandy and the Parisians.* It is impossible in this work to give a detailed account of all the events which succeeded, in the contest between the dauphin and Charles the Bad. Suffice it to say, that during one whole year through which it continued to rage, advantages and reverses were very equally balanced, though the successes of the Navarrese prince were greater at the commencement of the war than at the conclusion. Thus, at first, the towns of Mantes and Melun on the Seine, and the fortresses of Creil and Hereile, fell into the hands either of Charles of Navarre or of his brother; the course of the Seine and the Oise was entirely under their command; and Mauconseil, with St. Valery, and the small town of Velly on the Aisne, were captured by their troops. They were foiled, however, in an attempt to make themselves masters of Amiens by stratagem;† but Clermont, in Beauvoisis, was taken by the Captal de Buch; and Robin, the Scot, one of the Navarrese partisans, gained the castle of Roussy, while a number of adventurers in the south and east employed the name of the King of Navarre as excuse to pillage the whole country around. In the beginning of the following year the tide of fortune turned; St. Valery was recaptured for the dauphin by the constable and the Count of St. Paul; the Canon of Robsart, a staunch royalist, gained a number of advantages over the Navarrese troops; Lord Peter Audley was forced to retreat from Chalons, and Philip of Navarre, with a large force, fled rather precipitately before the forces of the constable.

At the time that the royalists were at the greatest point of depression, the despair of the French monarch, to whose ears every evil that his country suffered during his absence found ready passage, led him to enter into a private treaty with Edward of the most disadvantageous kind.‡ The truce between England and France was about to expire in April;§ and the thoughts of what France would suffer under

* 3d August, 1358. Chron. de France, chap. xci.

† 16th September, 1358.

‡ Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 177.

§ Both Froissart and M. Dacier are wrong in regard to the date of the termination of the truce of Bordeaux. Froissart says it

the united effects of faction and war overcame the firmness which John had hitherto displayed, in refusing to dismember his kingdom, and he yielded to Edward almost all that the English monarch could demand. The precise terms* of this treaty entered into between the King of England and the captive are unfortunately lost; and, as usual, the statements of the French and English historians are strangely opposite. The general chroniclers† of the one country declare that John had been induced to cede to Edward the whole of Normandy and Touraine, as well as those districts which by the most extreme allotment could be considered as parts of Aquitaine, namely, Saintonge, Quercy, Perigord, the Agénois, and the Limousin; whereas the English historians‡ assert that Edward relinquished all claim to Normandy, Anjou, and Maine, though formerly possessions of his family, and renounced his title to the throne of France, upon consideration of receiving Aquitaine, Ponthieu, Calais, and the Boulonois free of all homage. Between these contending statements the simple fact remains clear, that Edward's demands, and John's concessions, were excessive. The treaty, however, was signed and sealed by the two kings, and was sent over to France for the ratification of the dauphin and the French people, without whose co-operation the ransom stipulated to be paid by King John could not be

expired on the 1st of May (chap. ccccxix.), and M. Dacier makes it last till the 24th of June (vol. iii. p. 401, note). It was granted by the original convention (Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 133.) from the day of the signature, the 23d of March, 1357, till Easter-day following, and thenceforward for two years, ending the 9th of April, 1359. (Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 177.) The truce was, indeed, renewed by the King of France in person, on the 23d of March, 1359, from the day of its termination till the 24th of June. (Id. ibid. p. 180)

* The date of this treaty has also been a matter of doubt; but it is clear that it was concluded between the 20th of March and the 11th of May; for at the first date Edward merely speaks, in his letters of safe conduct for the Archbishop of Sens, of proposals of peace, discussed between him and the King of France (Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 180); and at the latter date he refers distinctly to the treaty (id. ibid. p. 182,) as already signed.

† Chron de France, chap. cx.

‡ Barnes, p. 563.

raised, nor the hostages promised be given. The Archbishop of Sens, the Count of Tankerville, and several other noble prisoners were selected to carry the treaty to Paris, and they accordingly set forth in the middle of May.* The States General of France had been already summoned for the 19th of that month,† and the treaty entered into between the two kings was immediately presented for their consideration.

His late successes against the King of Navarre,‡ as well as practice in the art of government, had greatly strengthened the hands of the regent, and made him less fearful of the consequences of his father's prolonged imprisonment. His own wishes in regard to the treaty were very evident; and on its being read to the states by the Advocate-General, all classes united in rejecting with indignation proposals which implied the dismemberment of the kingdom, and the loss of many of its finest provinces.§ The reply given to the nobles who bore the document was, that France would rather bear the miseries she already suffered, than consent

* Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 182.

† It has been supposed that, on the arrival of Edward's envoys, the states were called for the purpose of considering this treaty; but it would appear that such was not the case, as the nobles who carried it to France had not quitted London on the 11th of the month of May, and the members of the states, many of whom had to come from great distances to the French capital, were summoned to assemble together on the eighth day after. It is, therefore, more than probable that the envoys from Edward and John found the states assembling in Paris, though the actual opening of the chambers did not take place till the 25th.

‡ Froissart, and a number of other authors who have followed his statements, assert that the dauphin had by this time concluded a treaty with the King of Navarre, and that it was by the advice of that prince that he and his counsellors set their faces against the concessions made by King John. This account of the transaction is wholly incorrect. The treaty between the two kings was submitted to the States General on May 25th, 1359 (Chron. de France, chap. cx.); while the treaty of peace between the regent and the King of Navarre was not concluded till the 21st of August of the same year. (See Chroniques de France, chaps. cxiii. cxiv., and M. de Secousse, Mém. de Charles II., vol. i. p. 393.) Thus, instead of acting by the council of Charles the Bad, the dauphin was at that time waging open warfare against him, and remained at enmity with him for several months after.

§ Chron. de France, chap. cx. Froissart, chap. ccccxix.

to diminish her territories; that the king might remain in England if his liberty depended on such terms; and that doubtless God in his good time would provide a remedy.

Nor was the resolution this answer implied taken without consequent measures to support it vigorously. Troops and supplies were instantly voted; and the menace of danger from without produced in the present instance the effect of quieting, in a great degree, internal faction, and of uniting opposing parties in order to repel a common enemy. The war with the King of Navarre was instantly pursued with fresh spirit and energy; and the dauphin, finding it necessary to make every effort to put down that intestine foe before he was embarrassed by a renewal of hostilities with England, proceeded in the month of June to Melun, and made preparations for besieging that city and opening the communications on the Seine.* The siege continued for some weeks without being marked by any event of great importance from its commencement to its close; and indeed the only circumstances connected with it that call for the slightest notice are, that three queens† were within the walls of the besieged city, and that it terminated the warfare between the regent and Charles the Bad.

In the beginning of August conferences were opened at Pontoise,‡ in order to bring about a peace between the king and the dauphin; and on the 21st of that month a treaty was concluded, which healed for a time the dissensions of the land. Philip of Navarre, however, still refused to be a party to any negotiation in which the King of England was not included, and retiring from the neighbourhood of Paris, took refuge amongst the English garrisons in Normandy.§

In the mean while, the reply of the dauphin and the States General, concerning the treaty between Edward and John, was carried to the King of England, who seems to have been both angry and disappointed. His intention of renewing the war was instantly proclaimed; prayers were

* Chron. de France, chap. cxii.

† These were, Joan, queen of Charles le Bel, aunt of the King of Navarre; his sister Blanche, widow of Philip of Valois; and his own queen, the daughter of John King of France.

‡ Froissart says at Vernon. § Froissart, chap. ccccxii.

ordered throughout the realm for the success of his arms;* and we once more find this country involved in all the turmoil and bustle of military preparation. Before the termination of the truce, however, several events had occurred, some of a painful, some of a joyful nature, which may require notice in this place. In the early part of the year 1359,† Joan, Queen of Scotland, the sister of the English monarch, died, while visiting her native country. Her mother Isabella had terminated a long, turbulent, and unhappy life in the preceding year; and though Edward only showed a decent sorrow on the decease of a mother he could not respect, he grieved with unfeigned regret for a sister who had shown many virtues in circumstances of peculiar difficulty and pain, and whose whole life had been embittered by his own ambitious contentions with her husband.

The marriage of his son, John of Gaunt, however, with Blanch, second daughter of Henry Duke of Lancaster, soon effaced the memory of the past, and joy and festivity spread throughout the kingdom. A singular manner of celebrating this event must not be passed over without mention, as it affords a curious specimen of the customs of that day. The merchants and magistrates of the city of London appeared suddenly to be smitten with the chivalrous mania of the court; and it was generally announced by sound of trumpet, that the mayor, the two sheriffs, and one-and-twenty aldermen, would, for three days in Rogation week,‡ hold solemn justs, and keep the field armed at all

* Rymer, tom. iii. part i. pp. 185, 186.

† I find that her death is generally placed in the year 1358; but by a letter of King David, in Rymer tom. iii. part i. p. 178, it appears that she was still living in February of the following year.

‡ 8th March. Barnes, p. 561. All the old English chronicles attribute this curious little trait to the end of May, 1359; but I find in Rymer (vol. iii. part i.), by an order for the payment of expenses incurred at a tournament, that splendid justs were held in Smithfield on the 4th of March of that year. The two tournaments, however, may have been perfectly distinct. The order itself is somewhat interesting, as showing what sums were lavished in those times upon such spectacles. It is addressed by Edward to his treasurer and chamberlain, and commands the payment of thirteen pounds, eight sols, and eleven deniers, to

points against the whole of Europe. The court, as well as the King of France, and all the noble strangers then in London, were invited to witness this civic tournament.

The foreigners, and the principal ladies and nobles of the English court were present; but some dissatisfaction was expressed on finding that the king and the princes of the blood-royal did not honour the city with their presence. Nevertheless, the tournament proceeded with more than usual brilliancy: the mayor and aldermen performed feats of arms that drew down thundering plaudits from the spectators; and the champions bearing the cognizance of the city of London carried off all the prizes from a host of gallant competitors. Towards the end of the spectacle, however, the applause became louder, and the pleasure of the scene more intense, when it was whispered amongst the crowd, that the victor of Cressy and the hero of Poitiers, the English monarch, the Black Prince, and the three younger princes of the royal race, together with nineteen other renowned knights, bore the arms and represented the persons of the civic magistracy of the capital. It must be remembered, indeed, that in those days, for any knight to fight in the arms of another was the greatest compliment he could pay him; and when that compliment was from a king, and such a king, to his subject, we may easily conceive the gratification of the mayor at being represented by the monarch in person.

In similar pageants, immense sums were consumed every year; and so many temptations to expense existed, that it required great self-denial and circumspection, on the part of the young nobility of England, to avoid squandering away their fortunes and incurring debts by the lavish profusion which, in that day, was so constantly confounded with magnanimous liberality. Unhappily it so happened, that Edward the Black Prince possessed little of that prudent moderation which fixes the true boundary between extravagance and parsimony; and through his whole life we trace those pecuniary embarrassments, which, though

John of Montford, the king's ward, for expenses at the justs specified; which sum, if the calculation of Dr. Henry in regard to the relative value of money be correct, would amount in the present day to upwards of one hundred and fifty pounds.

now confined to his private fortune, were afterwards extended to his government of Aquitaine, and involved him in sorrows and difficulties that terminated only with his life. It appears that now, in his twenty-ninth year, he was so deeply indebted to various persons, that in order to enable him to accompany the expeditions preparing against France free from the importunity of his creditors,* his father was obliged to stipulate that all those territories which had been granted to him only for his own life should remain for four years after his death in the hands of his executors, for the purpose of paying off his debts, in case he died while absent from England.†

During the months of August and September, the preparations for active warfare were incessant throughout the land; and a larger army of his native subjects was collected by the English monarch than he had ever hitherto led into the field. His efforts, however, were not confined to England; and, giving notice that all his friends and allies on the continent were to join him at Calais, he held out prospects of wealth, aggrandisement, and glory, which soon set the whole of the north of Europe in motion.

The covetous contemplated the general pillage of the rich but disorganized realm of France with joy, and sprang into the saddle; the ambitious foresaw provinces to be governed, and high offices to be obtained, and called to their standard all who could swell the ranks of their reinforcements, or give importance to their aid; while the young, the chivalrous, and the free-hearted, thought of all the past glories of the English monarch's reign, and drew their swords to share in those which were still to come. All hastened towards Calais; so that before Edward was ready to take the field, the whole town and the neighbouring villages were filled with knights and soldiers waiting his arrival: the country was completely swept of provisions; and the city itself was in danger, from the multitude of those who came to aid in the conquest of the rest of France.

The tidings of this extraordinary muster reached Edward

* Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 185.

† This is the second time that such a transaction is noticed in this work; and I remember to have seen amongst the Cotton MSS. petitions for the payment of sums long due.

as he was collecting his forces for embarkation; and feeling that such an immense body of fierce and hungry friends might prove somewhat inconvenient on his first arrival,* he despatched the Duke of Lancaster to apologize to the principal leaders for his delay, and to find employment for the whole by an inroad into France, while he landed his troops and his supplies in quiet, and assumed such an attitude as would enable him to command his allies, as well as overpower his adversaries.

The gallant Duke of Lancaster fulfilled his mission with his usual skill and success. He landed† at Calais shortly after Michaelmas, 1359; and at the expense of a few kind words, and some small sums of money, to enable his new companions to pay their debts in the town, he easily persuaded the auxiliaries to march upon a pillaging incursion into the French territory.‡ In the mean time, Edward appointed Thomas of Woodstock, his youngest son, warden of the realm during his absence;§ and then, with an army of 100,000 men, borne by 1123 ships, he set sail from Sandwich on the 28th of October, at day-break,‖ and landed at Calais before night.

* Froissart, chaps. ccccxxv. ccccxxvi.

† Knighton, col. 2621.

‡ It appears from Knighton, that the Flemings had shewn a strong inclination about this time to abandon the interest of the King of England; and Barnes refers to a proclamation (not to be found in Rymer) forbidding the realm to all natives of Flanders. Whether such were the case or not I cannot tell; but a proclamation of Edward on the 18th of October, 1359, states precisely that the Flemings are still his good friends and faithful subjects. Barnes also declares, that before quitting England, Edward caused his royal prisoner King John to be strictly imprisoned in the Tower; but this is false beyond all doubt, as we find by Rymer (tom. iii. part i. p. 184), that John was removed to Somerton Castle in July, 1359, from which place he was not again transferred to any other spot till March, 1360, when the descent of French troops on the English coast rendered his security at Somerton doubtful. He was then carried to the palace of Edward the Black Prince at Berkhampstead, and not to the Tower, and his imprisonment was always rendered as light as possible. The number of French attendants allowed him at his choice was twenty on the first renewal of the war; but this was afterwards increased to thirty-six.

§ Barnes, p. 566. Walsingham, p. 165.

‖ Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 188.

CHAPTER XIII.

EDWARD INVADES FRANCE.—HIS LARGE ARMY AND CAREFUL PREPARATIONS.—NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE AUXILIARIES.—RAVAGES CAMBRESIS.—BESIEGES RHEIMS.—SIEGE AND CAPTURE OF COURMICY.—SIEGE OF RHEIMS ABANDONED.—TREATY WITH THE DUKE OF BURGUNDY.—EDWARD ADVANCES UPON PARIS.—TURNS TOWARDS BRITTANY.—REFUSES THE DAUPHIN'S OFFERS.—TREMENDOUS STORM AND SHOWER OF STONES.—NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE OPENED BETWEEN THE BLACK PRINCE AND THE DAUPHIN.—THE TREATY OF BRETIGNY.—KING JOHN SET AT LIBERTY.

On his arrival at Calais, the first care of the King of England, after the disembarkation of his troops and stores, was to send an order of recall to the Duke of Lancaster and his companions, who, by this time, had ravaged the country nearly as far as Peronne. He then passed four days at Calais, in order to refresh his troops; but finding, at the end of that time, that the duke did not appear, he commenced his march into the heart of France, with a force that set all opposition, in the open field, at defiance. The army of the King of England was not only the largest and the most splendid in all respects that he had ever led to battle, but it was also more carefully provided with everything necessary to its well-being, and more completely and regularly organized, than any feudal host that modern Europe had hitherto beheld. Indeed, the accounts that we receive of his forces at present, when compared with those which, in the beginning of his reign, were led to the siege of Cambray, show an astonishing advance in military science during the twenty years which had intervened. The march of the English host was conducted in the following order: 500 men-at-arms and 1000 archers were thrown forward, under the command of Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, bearing the title of Constable. Next to him appeared the marshals with 3000 lances, and 5000 archers, who were followed again by the king in person with a far larger force. Close upon the steps of the royal

division came 6000 baggage waggons: the supplies contained in which made the army very nearly independent of the state of the country.* Besides edible provisions of all kinds, portable forges for repairing arms and fabricating horse shoes, and hand mills and portable ovens for grinding the corn and baking large quantities of bread, followed the king. The line of march was closed by Edward the Black Prince, with his brothers, Lionel of Antwerp, John of Gaunt, and Edmund of Langley, accompanied by 2500 men-at-arms, 4000 horse archers, and an immense body of bow and bill men on foot.

The quantity of provisions, the splendour of the arms, and the beauty of the horses, excited the astonishment of all who beheld the army pass; but their wonder and admiration were still more called forth by the regular order and serried ranks of the English troops, who marched on, in perfect array, with 500 pioneers furnished with spades and axes, clearing the way before them, while every man appeared prepared for instant battle, and scarce a straggler was left behind.

While thus advancing, Edward was suddenly met by the Duke of Lancaster and the large body of auxiliaries, which had been ravaging the country towards Peronne. The chiefs of the allies came forward, and were received by the English monarch with courtesy and kindness; but he did not dismount from his horse; and on the Germans representing to him their necessities, and the expense they had incurred in waiting his arrival from England, he replied, that he could give them no satisfactory answer at the moment; but that he would send to them as soon as he had taken the advice of his council, if they would go on to Calais and repose themselves after their fatigues; they could easily join him afterwards, he added, as he was marching on but slowly.

With this answer, however unsatisfactory, the German adventurers were forced to content themselves; and passing by the train of English baggage waggons, a somewhat tempting object in the eyes of such a band of professional plunderers, they spoke for a short time with the Black

* Froissart. chap. ccccxxxi. Barnes, pp. 566, 567.

Prince, and then proceeded to Calais. Here they soon after received a message from Edward III., which was much more to the honour of his prudence than of his generosity. He represented to his good friends the Germans, Hainaulters, and others, that they were, at least, four times more in number than he had either expected or summoned, and he informed them that he had not brought over from England either sufficient wealth or sufficient stores to furnish them with the horses, arms, or money, which they had sold and spent in Calais, and to provide for his own troops also. Those who were willing to join him and partake of his fortune, either good or bad,* should, he declared, share largely in all the booty obtained; but he gave them notice that they were to expect no wages or compensation in any shape, farther than a portion of the plunder. To take as much away from the apparent ingratitude of this proceeding as possible, he furnished all those who did not choose to accept his offer, with the pecuniary means of returning to their own country; but this, he asserted—and very likely with truth—was all that he could do to assist them. A number, however, joined his army; and doubtless repaid themselves fully, by the plunder of France, for the expenses they had incurred in the service of England.

The slow march of the English army had given the principal towns of France full time to prepare for their defence; and, though it does not appear that any general plan was adopted by the government for protecting the country, yet each individual city took such precautions that Edward, though he passed through the whole of Artois unopposed, obtained no advantage in arms. His troops, especially his cavalry, suffered much by the continual rains and the want of forage in Artois, which country had been swept of its produce by the peasantry, who had taken refuge in the fortresses. The district of Cambresis, however, the lords of which fancied that their nominal subjection to the empire would protect them, had been left without any defence, and Edward found a rich resting place, which greatly recruited his strength.† The bishop,

* Froissart, chap. ccccxxix.
† Froissart.

indeed, and other chiefs who were assembled in Cambray, sent messengers to demand on what pretence the English king ravaged their territories, they being vassals of his ally the emperor. Edward replied, that as, in all his wars, they had acted as subjects of France, and when it suited them had denied the authority of the empire, he should treat them according to their deeds, without regard to their words, and show them no more consideration than he would to any other adherents of the house of Valois.

After having executed this threat to the utmost, he marched forward towards Rheims,* which seems to have been, from the first, the ultimate object of his expedition. Whether, indeed, it was his purpose to effect by force, as some have supposed,† his coronation in that city, as King of France, is by no means proved; but that he considered the capture of Rheims as an object of the first importance, is evident from his determined attempt to obtain possession of it, after having passed by, unassailed, many large and wealthy cities much more feebly defended. Finding the place strongly garrisoned and fortified, Edward determined to reduce it, if possible, by blockade; and he accordingly sat down before the walls without attempting an assault.‡ The winter had now set in severely; and had it not been for the large provision which Edward had made against every case of necessity, he would have been obliged to

* Walsingham, p. 166. Knighton, col. 2621.

† This supposition is rendered not at all unlikely, as Edward, in a treaty concluded with the Duke of Burgundy, on the 10th of March following, refers to the probability of his coronation as King of France in a manner which shows evidently that the subject was familiar to his mind. See Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 196.

‡ No two authors agree in regard to the time at which the siege of Rheims was undertaken, nor in respect to the day on which it was raised. Froissart declares that Edward sat down before the city the 30th of November; from which Knighton differs by eighteen days, and Walsingham by thirteen. The only correct statement that can be made on the subject is, that it commenced some time between the last day of November and the 18th of the following month, and that it was raised in the middle of January. Although Walsingham is certainly not to be depended upon always, yet upon the whole his statements appear to me to have been much too generally doubted. Knighton is often fully as inaccurate, and Matheo Villani, who falls far short of Giovanni Villani both in discernment and investigation, is more credulous and fanciful.

raise the siege much sooner than he ultimately did.* For a length of time he endeavoured to negotiate with the archbishop and the garrison; and strove, both by persuasions and threats, to induce them to yield the place into his hands; but they continued steady to their duty, and the siege was protracted during the whole winter.

As was usual upon occasions where a larger army was assembled than was absolutely necessary for the operations against a besieged city, detachments were sent out, in various directions, to scour the country and reduce the places of less importance in the neighbourhood. Thus Cernay,† in Dormois, was taken, though not without great loss on the part of the English, the Gascon Lord of Mucidan having been killed, with a number of his men, in the assault. A reinforcement coming to the army of the King of England, from the side of Hainault, was intercepted and almost totally annihilated, by the Lord of Roy and the Canon of Robsart; and a number of the straggling parties of English, which scattered themselves over the country in pursuit of plunder, were cut to pieces by the neighbouring garrisons. The strong castle of Courmicy, however, was assailed with success by the Lord Burghersh; and as the account given by Froissart of the fall of this place is interesting, I shall speak of it more in detail.

The fortress itself owed its capabilities of defence both to nature and art, and the garrison was commanded by a gallant young knight of Champagne, named Henry de Vans, who laughed the efforts of the English to scorn. The‡ principal strength of the castle lay in a large and massive square tower, which in that day was considered impregnable; and Burghersh, finding that he could not hope to win the place by assault, resolved to undermine this donjon, whatever labour it might cost. His operations for this purpose were immediately commenced; and covering his design under a number of other movements, he proceeded with the mine perfectly unperceived by the garrison.

The ordinary method of mining in those times was to excavate the earth under a building, the miners supporting

* Villani. † Knighton, col. 2621.
‡ Froissart, chap. ccccxxxviii.

the ground above them as they proceeded with beams of wood, upheld by strong piles. When the work was completed, it was usual to set fire to the piles, which being slowly burned away, the whole or part of the building generally fell to the ground, and the besieging force rushed in to slaughter the garrison already entangled in the ruins of their stronghold.

This plan was pursued in the present instance to a certain extent. The mine was carried forward successfully, till the whole foundation of the tower rested solely upon frames of woodwork; but at that point Lord Bartholomew de Burghersh generously commanded the farther proceedings to be delayed, and rode with some of his companions towards the barbican of the castle, making signs that he sought to speak with the commander. Sir Henry de Vans soon appeared, asking what he wished?

"I wish," replied the English officer, "that you and your companions would surrender, otherwise you are all dead men."

"How so?" cried the French knight, laughing. "We are all here within, as much in safety as when you began the siege, well furnished with all necessaries; and if you expect us to yield so easily, you are much deceived."

"Good faith, Sir Henry," replied the Lord Burghersh; "if you really knew how you yourself stand, you would surrender at once without more words; but if you will come forth, I will show you your real situation, and on my honour you shall return to your tower if you are then so inclined."

Finding that some more serious danger menaced him than he had suspected, Henry de Vans accepted the offer of the adverse leader; and, causing the gates to be opened, he came out with three companions, and was led by Lord Burghersh to the mine, where he found that the spark of a flint, or the blow of an axe, was all that was now required to overthrow the donjon. The French knights at once acknowledged the justice of Lord Burghersh's warning, and thanking him with sincere gratitude for his courtesy, they yielded themselves his prisoners. The garrison was then immediately marched out, and all the armour and baggage that the place contained was removed; after which the Eng-

lish commander ordered the mine to be fired, and waited at a distance with his prisoners to witness the effect. The beams were soon burned by the combustibles with which the place had been filled, and the foundations of the building giving way, it was seen to totter and shake; the thick walls at length were rent from the top to the bottom, and falling in separate directions, the whole was in one moment a mass of ruins.

The capture of a few neighbouring fortresses, however, advanced but little the siege of Rheims; and Edward at length finding that the country round, ravaged as it had been for many months by bands of plunderers and insurgents, would no longer afford subsistence to his army, determined upon decamping, and sweeping the rest of Champagne and Burgundy. He first directed his march by Chalons upon Bar le Duc, and then turning to the south-west led his forces towards Troyes.*

Troyes, it would appear, remained unattacked by the English army, but Tonnere was carried by assault. The English monarch thence marched on rapidly towards Burgundy, and finding the country far more rich and abundant as he proceeded, he advanced as far as Guillon on the little river Serain. Here Edward paused for some time, while a negotiation was entered into between English commissioners and envoys from the Duke of Burgundy, whose object was to secure immunity, or *suffrance*, as it was called, for the duchy. This was accomplished by means of a treaty, whereby the duke and Burgundian nobles agreed to pay the sum of 200,000 gold pieces of a coin called *muttons*, in order to obtain the departure of the English king.† Some small towns which Edward had taken were restored, and the prisoners made in Burgundy acquitted of their ransoms; the duke agreed not to bear arms in person against the English; but the rest of the nobles of the province retained their right of carrying on the war without the limits of Burgundy, though at the same time, they agreed not to make their fortresses within the duchy places of refuge

* Froissart, chap. ccccxxxix.
† 10th March, 1360. Rymer, tom. iii. part i. pp. 195, 196.

against the troops of Edward, while he pursued hostilities in the neighbouring districts.

During the negotiation of this treaty, Edward and his sons amused themselves with hunting and falconry; and, indeed, his whole march through France had hitherto been little but one long hunting party.* No enemy opposed him in the field, and having brought with him a pack of sixty hounds, and a complete train of huntsmen, with thirty falconers, he passed the greater part of his time in following the chase.

From Guillon, Edward directed his march at once upon Paris, and halted at Chanteloup, between Arpajon and Montlhéry, where negotiations for peace were commenced, but terminated suddenly without effect before the 9th of April.† Edward then marched nearer to the capital, and Sir Walter de Mauny, with a number of new knights, dubbed by Edward himself upon the occasion, advanced as far as the gates and skirmished with the garrison at the barriers. The fortifications, which had been begun by the dauphin, and had been rapidly concluded by Marcel the Prevot, for the purposes of rebellion, now saved Paris from the English army, and De Mauny was forced to retire to the camp without any very striking success.‡

Although Edward had as yet obtained no important advantage, yet many causes induced the regent to be more desirous of peace than he had formerly shown himself. A fleet and army which he had despatched from the ports of Normandy to invade England, had by this time been repelled from the British coast;§ and such measures had been

* Froissart, chap. ccccxli. † Chron. de France, chap. cxx.

‡ Froissart, chap. ccccxlv.

§ Knighton, col. 2622. Rymer, tom. iii. part i. pp. 197, 198, 199, 200. Knighton represents the conduct of the French, in their various attempts upon the English coast, as more brutal than it is possible to describe; but Knighton is at all times a prejudiced writer, and little credit is to be given to his representations, where he is speaking of the enemy. The French took Winchelsea, but were speedily forced to retreat to their ships; and an English fleet was soon collected, which, under the command of Sir John Pavely, Prior of the English Knights of St. John, swept the seas between the two countries, and forced the French to keep within the Norman ports.

taken by the English council, that all farther efforts against the maritime counties of Edward's dominions were certain to be unsuccessful. Domestic dissensions also had been renewed in France; a conspiracy had been discovered in Paris, in which several of the King of Navarre's attendants were involved, and one of the citizens attached to his party was beheaded for treason.* The king instantly quitted Paris; and, retreating to Mantes, gathered together a body of troops, sent his defiance to the dauphin, and once more began to wage war against the royalists with redoubled fury.

In the mean while France was ravaged from frontier to frontier by immense bodies of the free companions; and while the unhappy dauphin could assemble no army sufficient to keep the field for an hour against the King of England, the partisans of Edward and of the King of Navarre swept away the wealth of the whole land, and totally annihilated commerce, industry, and arts. Peace was therefore once more proposed by envoys from the regent on the 10th of April, but no terms could be agreed upon;† and Edward, after challenging the prince to come forth and give him battle, advanced, at the head of his army, under the walls of Paris, waited for a few hours to see the result, and then marched forward towards Chartres.‡

The motives of Edward's conduct in thus quitting Paris are not easily conceived, if indeed he entertained the intention of returning to besiege it afterwards; an intention ascribed to him by almost all the historians of the time.§

* Chron. de France, chap. cxix.

† Froissart, chap. ccccxlv. Chron. de France, chap. cxxi. Walsingham, 167.

‡ The English historians in general assert that Edward waited under the walls of Paris from the 12th to the 13th of April (Barnes, pp. 578, 579); but the account of the Chronicles of France, the compilers of which were living, and were most likely in Paris at the time, seems to me to be preferable, although Froissart pointedly declares that the King of England passed the night under the walls.

§ It is very possible that the famine which desolated a great part of France, had been increased in intensity in the neighbourhood of Paris, by the necessity under which the dauphin lay of supplying the city with provisions at any price against the expected siege. If this were the case, Edward's army might be in greater

The summer was now before him; and if ever he could have hoped to reduce the French capital by famine, it was surely after a long and hard winter had exhausted a great part of the provisions of the former year. It is more probable indeed that his view in moving towards Britanny, was completely to subjugate that province and Touraine; and thus to obtain possession of the whole of the south-west of France; while the feuds of the dauphin with the King of Navarre, and the expeditions of the free companies, occupied the whole forces of France in the north and east.

His march was uninterrupted; and a party of French knights, who issued forth from Paris to cut off the stragglers of his army, fell themselves into an English ambuscade, and were driven back to Paris with defeat and loss. The state of France, however, had not been forgotten by the pope; and, though almost despairing to effect anything for the relief of the country, amongst the fearful miseries by which it was oppressed, he still named commissioners to treat with Edward, and endeavour to induce him to listen to reasonable terms of peace.

The persons entrusted with this pacific mission were Hugh of Geneva, Lord of Anthon, the Abbot of Clugny, and Simon de Langres, master of the Minor Friars.* These three set out from Paris shortly after Edward had begun his march towards the west,† and overtook the mo-

want of provisions than even the Parisians themselves; and on that account the king might find himself compelled to abandon the hope of reducing the capital at that time. This, however, is merely a supposition. I have no contemporary authority to offer in support thereof, unless a few words of Froissart, stating that Edward's object in decamping was to refresh his army on the banks of the Loire, and in Britanny, where the vintage promised favourably, can be received as some confirmation of this hypothesis.

* The Duke of Lancaster is said to have urged Edward strongly to conclude a treaty of peace, making use of the just and forcible words, in regard to the war:—"Monseigneur, vos gens y gagnent et vous y perdez."

† I have separated the papal envoys altogether from those of the regent, because I am induced to believe that they set out before the others. My reasons for thinking so are the following:—In the first place, Froissart decidedly states that the three persons mentioned as commissioned by the pope overtook Edward at

march at Galardon,* a little town between Epernon and Aunay. The demands of Edward, however, were still so excessive, that the ministers of peace almost abandoned the hope of obtaining any reasonable terms from one whose expectations were so highly raised. They followed him on his march, however, and engaged several of the king's council in the attempt to moderate the exactions of their sovereign; but Edward, we are told, resisted all entreaties; and even the remonstrance and advice of the Duke of Lancaster, for whose opinion he showed, in general, the greatest deference, failed in the present instance to soften the sternness of the monarch's determination. The offers which the Duke of Normandy had permitted the envoys to make in his name, were extended, day by day; but still Edward marched on,† and had reached, if not passed, the town of Chartres, before he relented in any degree. This obduracy, however, is said to have at length yielded to the effect produced on his mind by one of the most extraordinary atmospherical convulsions recorded in history, which took place while his army was drawn up within sight of Chartres.

The cold suddenly became intense, and the air peculiarly dark; after which a tremendous storm of lightning and hail occurred,‡ mingled with large stones, by the united effects of which nearly 6000 horses and 1000 men belonging to the English army, were killed on the spot. Lord Robert Morley and Lord Guy Beauchamp, the eldest son of the Earl of Warwick, are said to have perished

Galardon, and there urged him to renew the negotiations; at the same time we find, by the Chronicles of France, that the envoys from the dauphin did not set out from Paris till the 27th of April; did not reach Edward till he had passed Chartres; and did not recommence the negotiations till the 1st of May. The tremendous storm, of which I shall have to speak, and to the terrific effects of which is generally ascribed the renewal of the conferences for peace, happened on the 28th of April, at which time the papal messengers were certainly with the English army; but we have no reason to believe that the deputies from the dauphin had yet overtaken Edward. (See Chroniques de France, chap. cxxii. Froissart, chap. ccccxlvi.)

* Now often written Gellardon. † Froissart.

‡ Froissart, chap. ccccxlvi. Walsingham, p. 167. Knighton, col. 2621. Vit. Ed. fil. Ed. III., apud Barnes, p. 583.

amongst the rest; and so terrible was the whole scene, that many of the persons present conceived that the end of the world was at hand. Edward himself, struck with awe, saw, in the extraordinary meteoric phenomenon before his eyes, an especial manifestation of Heaven's wrath at his obduracy,* and immediately determined to consent to more moderate terms than he had heretofore been willing to receive. Such, at least, is the account of all contemporary historians; and while this statement is perfectly characteristic of the period, the trait recorded is not at all irreconcilable with the character of the monarch. Edward might be far less superstitious than his age, and yet not be without superstition.

Having taken his resolution, Edward proceeded to Banneval, where he was overtaken by the envoys of the dauphin, charged with powers to conclude a truce upon terms likely to produce at length a permanent peace. Edward now, without hesitation, agreed to treat; and send-

* We find from the life and writings of Christine de Pisan, that Charles V., surnamed the Wise, one of the most shrewd, calm, penetrating, and learned, as well as the least imaginative of French monarchs, was a most devout believer in judicial astrology, and entertained a number of astrologers at his court. There is even great reason to believe that he was equally credulous in regard to magic. If such was the case with one of the greatest contemporary monarchs, I can conceive no reason for supposing that Edward III. was more enlightened; and am inclined to give full credit to the assertion of contemporary writers, that he was moved to grant more favourable terms to the dauphin, on the belief that the storm which overtook his army at Chartres, was an immediate manifestation of the divine will. In regard to the particulars of the storm itself—one of the most remarkable on record—they are to be found in every historian of the time. The fall of stones is especially marked by Froissart, who says that a number of men were killed, but does not add how many. The general superstition of the day is too well known to require farther comment; yet the picture of the extent to which this was carried, afforded by "The Dream of Philip de Maisieres" (chap. lxiii.), is so extraordinary that it may not be unworthy of notice. "Even the greatest secular princes," he says, speaking in the person of an astrologer, "dare commence nothing without my command and my choice. They dare neither found a castle, build a church, commence a war, begin a battle, put on a new robe, offer a jewel, undertake a journey, nor go out of their house, without my approbation."

ing back the envoys to Chartres, he moved nearer to that town, establishing his head-quarters at the little town of Sours, about three miles from that city.* The place fixed for the negotiations was Bretigny, and thither repaired the envoys on both parts; the Chancellor of France, the Lord of Montmorency, and the Maréchal de Boucecault, appearing on the part of the dauphin, together with a number of other persons of less note; while the Lords Cobham and Burghersh, with Sir Frank von Hall, and several other knights and gentlemen, were commissioned to treat, not absolutely in the name of the King of England, but in that of the Prince of Wales.†

On the 7th of May, a truce for a year and some weeks was concluded; and on the following day, a treaty of peace, the most conclusive and comprehensive that had yet been proposed, was drawn up and sealed by the commissioners on either side. An immense number of charters and conventions, confirmatory and explanatory of the principal document, followed; but it is to be remarked that in none, except one of very doubtful authenticity given by Froissart, does Edward III. appear as treating in person.‡ The cause of this omission probably was, that as the dauphin could only act conditionally during the imprisonment of King John, Edward did not choose to commit his own dignity under such unequal circumstances, though he was willing to end the war upon the very advantageous terms held out to him.

The day following, the 9th of May, six English commissioners accompanied the French negotiators to Paris, to witness the oath by which the dauphin bound himself to observe the treaty.§ The joy of the French nation at the prospect of peace and tranquillity, burst forth with enthu-

* Chron. de France, chap. cxxii. Froissart, chap. ccccxlvi.

† Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 201.

‡ To the great treaty given in Rymer (vol. iii. part i.), from p. 202 to p. 209, we find attached the names of twenty-three commissioners, on the part of Edward III., amongst whom are all the principal nobles of England and Gascony; so that sufficient security was given that it would be ultimately ratified by the king himself, though Edward did not swear to adhere to it till the French monarch was ready to ratify it on his part.

§ Chron. de France, chap. cxxx.

siasm on the news of the conclusion of the negotiations. A number of the nobles and clergy went out into the fields to meet the English envoys; the bells of all the churches rang at their approach; the streets were strewed with flowers and green boughs,* and the houses were hung with tapestry and cloth of gold.

The royal family of France were assembled at the palace of the Archbishop of Sens, and there, on the following day, being Sunday, the dauphin took the oaths required, in the midst of the solemn mass of the day.† The English commissioners then returned to the royal army, accompanied by six French nobles, deputed to witness the oath of the Black Prince to observe the treaty, which was accordingly given on the 16th of the month at Louviers in Normandy.‡

Edward§ himself had previously set out for England, where he arrived on the 18th of May, while the English army, accompanied by the Constable de Fiennes, and a body of French men at arms, destined to facilitate its peaceful passage through the country, pursued its march to Calais.

Those who can conceive the agony of a captive king, to the walls of whose prison the groans of his suffering people have come up night and day, for three years,—to

* Froissart, chap. ccccxlviii.

† Chron. de France, chap. cxxx. ‡ Id. chap. cxxxi.

§ This fact is not stated by any of the chronicles; but it is rendered more than probable by the dates of other transactions. The oath of the Black Prince to the treaty was given at Louviers, in Normandy, on the 16th, while Edward, who by all accounts embarked at Honfleur, or at Harfleur, was in England on the 18th of May. (Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 209.) Now the distance between either Harfleur or Honfleur and Louviers, especially by the roads at that time, renders it not, indeed, impossible, but very improbable, that Edward accomplished the journey in the interval. We know that he long preceded the army; and as in the memorandum of his arrival in England no mention is made of his being accompanied by the Black Prince, it appears almost certain that he left his forces under the command of his eldest son.

The account given by Barnes states an impossibility; namely, that Edward himself marched his army from Chartres to Calais, a distance of about two hundred miles, and returned to Honfleur, very nearly a hundred and fifty more, in eight days.

whom every messenger has brought tidings of rich lands over-run and beautiful provinces desolated, of subjects slain and cities burned, of grass growing in his highways and blood deluging his fields, of famine stalking through his country and mad anarchy reigning in his capital,—those who can conceive the horrors of such a situation, may easily imagine the joy of King John on first hearing the tidings of peace.

Those tidings were* communicated to him by Edward himself;† and as the terms of the treaty of Bretigny were less severe than those to which he had himself agreed before the last campaign, his joy was increased by finding that the sacrifice required in order to obtain liberty for himself, and tranquillity for his dominions, was less than he had hitherto expected.

The famous treaty of Bretigny is far too long to be inserted in this place; and as I have before said, the multitude of interests to be conciliated, and the number of difficulties to be overcome, gave rise to a thousand additional charters and conventions.‡ I shall only therefore notice a few of the principal items of a treaty, which for the time effected a great change in the relations of many Europeans states.

It consisted of forty articles, by the first of which the French king and nation ceded to Edward, to hold in the same manner as it had been held by the kings of France, without homage or reservation, all that district divided until lately into the French provinces of Gascony, Guienne, Sainctonges, Angoumois, Limousin, and Poitou, together with the city and territory of Rochelle, thus comprising between sixteen and seventeen of the present departments of France. This formed the whole of what was then

* Froissart, chap. ccccxlix.

† Froissart declares that Edward caused John to be brought secretly to the chapel of his palace at Westminster, where he communicated to him the terms of peace.

‡ The whole of the papers concerning this peace evince that the diplomatists of France and England had by this time learned the difficulties of tying men's hearts and consciences by bonds of parchment, and were struggling to leave no point in doubt, which might afterwards afford the means of evasion to either party.

called Aquitaine, and the cession was complete, unconditional, and as distinct as language could make it. In addition to this, the town and territory of Montreuil sur Mer; the county of Ponthieu, the county of Guisnes, and the whole sea-coast district from Gravelines to Sandgate inclusive, were made over to the English monarch, who was likewise confirmed in possession of the town and territory of Calais. Together with the tracts of country thus yielded, were specifically ceded all the islands opposite to their coasts. The dauphin and the king next covenanted to make over fully and formally, and to give seisin and possession of all the lands and lordships specified; to command all nobles, churches, and towns within those territories to yield the same obedience and homage to the King of England that they had hitherto yielded to the King of France; and to absolve them from all oaths, engagements, and duties towards the French crown.

A number of articles follow in the treaty, by which the rights of the King of England in the territories above named are clearly and fully guarded from doubt or contestation; and it is distinctly stated, that whether the provinces or any part of them ceded did or did not at any former time belong to the King of England, they are now to become his; as *sovereign and liege lord, and as neighbour to the king and kingdom of France, without acknowledging any superiority in France, without owning any obedience, homage, dependence, or subjection; and without in any time, present or to come, rendering any service or acknowledgement for those territories to the kings or to the crown of France.*

The King of France and the dauphin further promise to renounce formally all right and title in those provinces, counties, &c.; while on his part the King of England and his eldest son agree to renounce all claim or title to any other part of France, to the crown of that country, or to Normandy, Touraine, Anjou, and Maine. They also resign their pretensions to the homage of Britanny and Flanders, and every other demand upon the King of France whatever, except those justified by the treaty itself; a similar renunciation of all claims upon the King of England being made by John and the dauphin. The King of

England stipulates to bring his royal prisoner to Calais, within three weeks of the 24th of June next ensuing. The King of France promises to pay by instalments for his ransom the sum of three millions of crowns, two of which to equal in value an English noble. On paying the first instalment, delivering to the King of England the towns, castles, and territories of Rochelle and Guisnes, and yielding a number of hostages afterwards named, within four months from his arrival at Calais, the King of France is to be free to return to his kingdom without let or hindrance.

John de Montford is to be restored to all the territories held by his father in France, beyond the limits of the duchy of Britanny; and in regard to his claims, and those of Charles of Blois, the two kings are to examine the rights of each, and endeavour to mediate between them. If this cannot be accomplished within a certain time, the contending parties may settle their difference as they think fit, the friends of either being at liberty to aid or abet the claimant to whom he is attached, without impediment on the part of either sovereign. The two kings, however, are not on that account to undertake a war against each other, and the homage of the duchy of Britanny is ever to belong to the crown of France.

Several clauses succeed, intended to secure immunity to all the adherents of either party engaged in the war, to obtain a restitution of all territories and rights forfeited on account of actions committed in the course of the dissensions lately passed; and to insure the maintenance of privileges and advantages granted previously to the cities and provinces now transferred from one monarch to the other.

On the delivery of the towns and fortresses assigned to the King of England, he promises to withdraw his troops from all other places held by him in France, with the exception of Britanny, which is to remain for the time in its present state.

The King of France promises as soon as possible to forego his alliance with the Scots; and the King of England in the same manner engages to abandon his connection with the Flemings. The other clauses are either explanatory of the above particulars, or declaratory of the means

to be used for rendering the treaty more complete and binding, for obtaining the sanction and confirmation of the church of Rome, and for compelling all persons inclined to resist any of the stipulations to yield final obedience.*

Such is a faint outline of the famous treaty of Bretigny, which for the time spread joy and satisfaction through all Christendom. Perhaps we may except from the countries which took part in this universal rejoicing the kingdom of Scotland and the county of Flanders, which shared the fate that ever attends the weak when they embark in the quarrels of the great, and were sacrificed as soon as their alliance was no longer valuable. I can discover no remonstrances made upon the occasion; but it would appear that either a natural sense of the baseness of the clauses relating to those countries, or the representations of the parties interested, induced the two kings ultimately to modify their conduct; and letters were granted, which insured to Scotland and Flanders the protection of their more powerful allies for a year and some months after the liberation of the French king.†

From the moment of Edward's return to England, King John, though strictly watched, was no longer treated as a prisoner. He accompanied the English monarch to Windsor,‡ passed some time with the royal family in festivity and rejoicing, offered splendid oblations at St. Paul's cathedral,§ and then in the beginning‖ of July set sail for Calais, accompanied by the Black Prince, the Duke of Lancaster, and a splendid suite of English nobles. John had still to remain several months at Calais, ere the time arrived for the ratification of the treaty, the delivery of the hostages, and the payment of the first instalment of his ransom. A number of difficulties occurred in the mean time; and some events took place which, had either party been insincere in their pacific professions, might have led to a renewal of the war.¶

* Rymer, tom. iii. part i. pp. 202, 209.
† Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 20.
‡ Froissart, chap. ccccxlix.
§ Dugdale, Hist. of St. Paul's, p. 21.
‖ 9th of July. Walsingham, p. 168.
¶ Froissart, chap. ccccl.

The hostages promised could scarcely be prevailed upon by any means to yield themselves to the sort of honourable captivity in which they were to be held; the impoverished land of France could not furnish even the first instalment of the king's ransom; and the citizens of Rochelle, which town and territory by the fifteenth clause of the first treaty was to be yielded within four months, made every effort to avoid obedience.*

At the same time, on the one hand, Lord Burghersh, and a number of other Englishmen, had been arrested in France, contrary to the existing truce; and on the other large bodies of the English soldiery continued the war as violently as ever.†

Mutual concession and good faith, however, removed all difficulties. The Black Prince was entrusted by his father with unlimited powers,‡ and the mild and generous disposition of the Hero of Poitiers conciliated all parties and overcame all obstacles. The name of Rochelle was omitted in the clause regarding places to be yielded immediately; and the time was extended for its cession. Lord Burghersh and his companions were freed by the exertions of the Constable de Fiennes; the hostages were induced to comply; and the first portion of the ransom of the king§ was raised by some of the small states of Italy, on the promised marriage of John Galeas Visconti, son of the sovereign of Milan, with Isabella, daughter of the French monarch.‖

* Froissart, chap. ccccl xi. † Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 213.
‡ Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 211.
§ The taxes which already existed in France had become so enormous that they seemed to leave no possibility of drawing anything more from the impoverished population: and yet we find, that to pay the king's ransom fresh imposts of the kind called *aids* were laid upon almost every article, either of luxury or necessity. M. Alexis Monthiel, in his "Historie des François des divers Etats," a work full of originality, wit, and profound research, cites aids imposed upon wine, bread, flour, pastry, grain, dead and living cattle, leather, fish, woollen stuffs, parchment and books, drapery, saddlery, lead, tin, iron, steel, and a thousand other things, giving such a picture of the state of France, that the hearts of her enemies, if they had hearts, must have melted to see the evils which had fallen upon her.
‖ Villani, lib. xii. chap. ciii.

When everything was prepared Edward III. once more passed the seas, and took up his abode in Calais; while the dauphin, who had been long at St. Omer endeavouring to accelerate his father's liberation, proceeded to Boulogne to receive his parent on his approaching emancipation. Continual pageants and festivities occupied the two monarchs during their residence at Calais, and banquets were given reciprocally, on which occasions the Black Prince and the Duke of Lancaster were permitted to sit at meat with the sovereigns; but on the grand state entertainment offered by Edward to the French king, on the last day of his stay at Calais, the princes and the Duke of Lancaster, with a number of the most distinguished English nobles, served bare-headed at the table of the two monarchs. In the mean while, however, the council of each was busily employed in negotiating a variety of important transactions, and drawing up an immense number of papers relative to the approaching peace.

At length all was concluded; and the treaty was solemnly ratified by both monarchs. The first instalment of the ransom was paid; and King John was set at liberty on the 25th of October, 1360, after an imprisonment of rather more than four years.* He immediately set out for Boulogne, accompanied by Edward the Black Prince and that commander's two brothers, but John returned not to his territories in the garb and array of a monarch. His first care was to express his gratitude to God for his deliverance; and he accomplished his journey from Calais to Boulogne as a pilgrimage on foot, with every mark of humility and self-abasement. On his arrival in his own dominions he offered his thanksgiving, in the church of Notre Dame of Boulogne, in which city he remained for several days. A number of other transactions ensued†

* Chron. de France, chap. cxxxiii.

† The treaties, protests, and letters patent, regarding the transactions at Calais, are to be found in Rymer, tom. iii. part ii., from the beginning to p. 35. I shall merely notice here a few of these documents, which seem the most important. The first is the treaty as corrected and ratified at Calais, containing no changes which require to be particularized in this place; then follow the ratifications of the two monarchs, witnessed by the papal nuncio; and

relative to the peace; and towards the end of the year the two monarchs took their departure from their mutual frontier, and each returned to the capital of their own dominions.

the promissory letters, binding them to exchange the final letters of renunciation to the territories and titles ceded and yielded by the treaty, within one year, in the city of Bruges. Agreements on both parts that the French and English nobles shall be sworn to the treaty; letters of the King of France. renouncing his title to the territories ceded in case Edward fulfils the treaty; letters of renunciation on the part of the King of England to all other parts of France except those ceded by the treaty, provided John fulfils his engagements, and other letters to the same effect, follow. Next appears a mutual treaty of peace and alliance between the two kings; some papers in regard to the expenses of King John at Calais, the personal promise of King John to pay the sum stipulated for his ransom, an acknowledgement of the receipt of four hundred thousand florins in part payment of the first instalment, and an extension of time for the discharge of the rest of that first instalment, occupy the next pages. A document comes next by which Edward agrees to deliver all the fortresses he holds in Champagne and Brie, in Nivernois, in Auxerrois and Burgundy, and in the Orleanois, upon which John is to put him in possession of Ponthieu, or hostages from that county: on the delivery of those strong places held by England and Normandy, the county of Montford, or hostages, are to be given up to Edward; and in the same manner the gradual accomplishment of all the stipulated cessions is formally arranged. Some papers to the same purpose, and some others for the security of the hostages, come next. Those that follow are generally confirmatory of the several clauses of the treaty; together with an acknowledgement in form from John and his son, the dauphin, that Edward had, according to promise, set his father at liberty.

CHAPTER XIV.

DEATH OF A NUMBER OF CELEBRATED WARRIORS.—MARRIAGE OF THE BLACK PRINCE.—PROCEEDINGS IN EXECUTION OF THE TREATY OF BRETIGNY.—INCREASE OF THE GREAT COMPANIES.—THEY DEFEAT THE FORCES OF THE KING OF FRANCE UNDER JAMES OF BOURBON—THE POPE PREACHES A CRUSADE AGAINST THEM.—THE MARQUIS OF MONTFERRAT LEADS A PARTY INTO ITALY.—PROCEEDINGS IN BRITTANNY.—THE WAR BETWEEN BLOIS AND MONTFORD RENEWED.—TREATY OF EVRAN CONCLUDED.—EVADED BY CHARLES OF BLOIS.—DEATH OF THE DUKE OF LANCASTER—PROCEEDINGS OF PARLIAMENT.—SUMPTUARY LAWS.—PLEADINGS ORDERED TO BE CONDUCTED IN THE ENGLISH TONGUE.—EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE CREATED DUKE OF AQUITAINE.—GREAT HUNTING EXPEDITION OF THE ENGLISH COURT.

It is a curious fact that many of the most illustrious commanders who served under Edward III. quitted the busy scene of life within a year before or after the treaty for a general peace between England and France was concluded.* Roger Earl of March, who had acted as constable in the last expedition, died at Rouvray, in Burgundy, in February; Robert Lord Morley was killed with Lord Guy Beauchamp in the storm near Chartres; the famous Earl of Oxford died during the siege of Rheims, in January; the Earl of Northampton, one of the most renowned knights of the age, followed in September; the beginning of December, 1360, saw the death of Sir John Beauchamp, Constable of Dover Castle, who for the last ten years had distinguished himself highly in the English army; and Thomas Lord Holland expired on the 28th of that month. In the following summer the famous Duke of Lancaster and Reginald Lord Cobham, of whom I have had so frequently to speak in the history of the past years, were added to the list of celebrated warriors who closed their mortal career with the close of those wars in which they had distinguished themselves.

The death of Lord Holland, however, was the only one

* Barnes, p. 603.

by which the fortunes of the Black Prince were particularly affected. The deceased nobleman had early in life been affianced to Joan the daughter of the Earl of Kent, at that time a mere child.* During his absence from England, the earl, or rather, as it is supposed, the Countess of Salisbury, under whose charge she was left, either ignorant of the previous engagement, or stimulated by the prospect of great wealth and an alliance with the royal family, caused a contract of marriage to be drawn up between Joan of Kent and the heir of the house of Montague. When the young lady advanced to a marriageable age, however, she was claimed by the Lord Holland; and the dispute was brought before the court of Clement VI. By this time her beauty had become the theme of fame and song throughout Europe; and the feeble constitution of her brother John rendered it not improbable that all the immense wealth which had accumulated during the youth of two earls of Kent would at length descend to her. Clement, after long investigations, decided in favour of Lord Holland; the second contract was annulled; and the fair Maid of Kent, as she was generally called, was united to the person unto whom she had been first affianced. A very short time elapsed after his marriage ere the death of her brother, without issue, rendered her Countess of Kent in her own right; and the decease of Lord Holland in the present year left her a beautiful widow, with the largest possessions held by any woman within the dominions of the King of England.

Her birth, her beauty, and her wealth, caused the hand of the widowed Countess of Kent to be an object of rivalry amongst all the greatest and noblest of the youth of England; and the influence of the Black Prince, her cousin, is said to have been exerted to forward the suit of one of his friends.† The countess, however, was firm in her refusal; and we are told that it was in pleading the cause of his

* Barnes, in his History of Edward III., p 607, represents these transactions differently. Some parts of his account are unpleasant, and not fit for discussion in this place; but it would be easy to show, were it necessary, that the events of which he gives a statement are not only improbable, but impossible.

† Barnes, p. 618.

friend that Edward himself first learned to love. Nor was that love unhappy; for whether the above anecdote be true or not—and it is doubtful—certain it is that on the 10th of October, 1361, he was united to the Countess of Kent, after obtaining a special dispensation from the pope to free them from the obstacle of their consanguinity.* Although the bride was two years older than her husband, and although she was already the mother of three children, the union of the two cousins seems to have given the greatest satisfaction to the king, who hastened the arrangements for their marriage by every means in his power.

Before this alliance was concluded, however, a great number of the cities and provinces, the cession of which had been promised by the King of France, were surrendered to the English monarch, though, as may be supposed, not without remonstrance and opposition on the part of the inhabitants. John Chandos, who had been appointed Edward's *locum tenens* in France,† did all that was possible to conciliate the affections of his sovereign's new subjects, and to soothe the irritation which they felt at their transfer from one crown to another; but it requires the passing of long years to obliterate all the memories and sever all the ties which unite the parts of a great empire together; and we may easily conceive that, though compelled to do homage and show obedience to the English monarch, the dismembered provinces of France were still French in feelings, in wishes, and affections. Indeed it would seem less difficult for a nation speaking a different tongue to conquer and retain possession of a neighbouring kingdom entirely, than to sever from it a part contiguous to and using the same language as the rest of the country.

The resistance of the cities and provinces, however, only served to delay the final arrangements consequent upon the peace; for John, whose maxim still was, that if faith and truth were banished from the rest of the world, their place of refuge should be the breasts of kings, was resolute in the performance of his engagements; and as those engagements had been undertaken with the consent and advice of

* Rymer, tom. iii. part i. p. 47.
† Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 36.

his nobles and people, he was armed with power to enforce obedience.

On the other part, Edward, whose nobles had likewise been sworn to the execution of the treaty,* hastened to surrender to the persons deputed by the French king all those towns and fortresses which he held in France, with the exception of those granted to him by the peace of Bretigny. The consequences, however, instead of being favourable, were ruinous to France. The bands of free companions which already ravaged that unhappy country, were greatly increased by volunteers from the English garrisons withdrawn from the castles now surrendered.† Multitudes of men, actuated by a thousand different principles, were carried impetuously to the same course. All whom a life of enterprise and adventure had rendered unfit for more calm and sober employments—all whose trade was war alone—all whose cupidity was excited by hopes of plunder—all who naturally delighted in blood and strife—all who had not the means to live in peace—and all who contemplated punishment for their crimes if they returned as individuals to their native country, joined the adventurous bands that swarmed in different parts of France. English, Flemings,

* Walsingham, p. 170.

† From the increase of the Great Companies, as they were called, from after misstatements on the part of Charles V. of France, when he strove, by imputing their existence to Edward as a breach of the treaty, to justify his own breach of it, and from the fact of Froissart having entitled one of his chapters, after the peace of Bretigny, "Comment les Grand Compagnies commencerent," it has been very generally imagined and stated that they originated in France after the signature of that treaty. This, however, as we have already seen, was by no means the case. For many years—apparently even before the rout of Poitiers—the Great Companies had been in existence, increasing in importance daily; and long before the treaty of Bretigny they were not alone simple plunderers, but bands of such power and such extent, that they marched through the country in the face of other armies, who dared seldom attack them, took towns and fortresses, and, as we have seen, ravaged the land to the very gates of Paris. The end of every campaign, the conclusion of every war, the signature of every truce, saw their numbers and their power increase: and the general pacification which took place after the treaty of Brittanny only augmented their numbers in proportion to the magnitude of that event.

Hainaulters, Germans, Gascons, and Italians, as well as a multitude of Frenchmen of the worst description, united for the purposes of pillage. Security, happiness, and commerce were at an end in those parts of the country where they appeared; prayers were offered up in the churches for deliverance from their oppressions, and the clergy and people of every province abandoned themselves to despair at their approach.

The south-eastern districts of France seem to have been for some time more severely afflicted with this pest than any other part of the country; and, at length, after having assembled to the number of 15,000 men in Burgundy, they determined upon directing their march to the south, and plundering once more the rich lands on the banks of the Rhone. Intelligence of their march reached the King of France early in the year 1362,* and he immediately despatched messengers to James of Bourbon, Count de la Marche, who, after having been liberated from the imprisonment to which the battle of Poitiers had consigned him, had proceeded to Languedoc, for the purpose of conducting the various arrangements consequent upon the peace of Bretigny. He was now ordered by the king to collect the whole forces of the southern provinces, and to oppose a vigorous resistance to the insolent daring of the Great Companies, as the plunderers were then called. Brave, chivalrous, and courteous, James of Bourbon found no difficulty in calling to his banner all the knights and men-at-arms of the neighbouring country; and marching towards Lyons, he halted in the vicinity of that city to watch the movements of his adversaries, who were advancing from the side of Macon.

The news of his march only hastened the approach of the adventurers, who, confident in their strength, skill, and bravery, looked forward to an encounter with the royal forces as an opportunity of gaining new power, and of opening a fresh field for their enterprises. It is to be remarked also, that the great companies had adopted a sys-

* Froissart places the events I am about to relate under the year 1361; but that he did so erroneously is shown both by the Chronicles of France (chap. cxxxvi.), and by the epitaph of James of Bourbon.

tem of tactics somewhat different from that which was in use amongst the chivalrous armies of the time; this comprised all those rapid movements and artful stratagems suggested by a wild and desultory life of warfare; so that their fertility in schemes and devices had often given them the advantage over bodies of men equal to themselves in courage and superior in numbers and arms. On the other hand, however, the Count de la Marche was accompanied by Regnault de Cervolles, named the Archpriest, who, having been, as we have shown, one of the most successful leaders of adventurers himself for several years, was well qualified to meet them in their own manner.

The free companions marched forward rapidly, attacking the smaller towns and castles on their way, till they arrived at Brignais, on the Rhone, about three leagues from Lyons, where, after having taken the castle of the lord of the place, they entrenched themselves on a steep, but not very high hill, in the hollows that furrow the top of which, by far the greater part of their numbers was concealed. The most precipitous parts of the rock faced the road to Lyons, and the gentle ascent which, from the other side, led to their entrenchments, could only be reached either by taking an immense circuit, or by passing to the right or left of their position, through a hollow way between the hill and two neighbouring mountains. At the same time an immense quantity of heavy stones, which had been accumulated on the summit that they occupied, afforded an easy means of guarding the pass.

Their numbers seem first to have been reconnoitred by the archpriest, who reported that they amounted to nearly 16,000 men; but his statement was afterwards contradicted by the Count de Uzes and Regnault de Forez, more superficial observers, who, deceived by the front they presented, could not discover more than six or seven thousand ill-armed brigands. Contrary to the strongest remonstrances of Cervolles and several other experienced knights, the attack was immediately begun; and the archpriest led the advanced parties, who, taking their way under the hill, were, as he expected, assailed by torrents of large stones, cast down upon their heads with such force that neither helmet nor shield could resist the blows, and a great number

of his men and horses were crushed or maimed before he had effected his march half through the pass. The rest were scattered in confusion; but James of Bourbon and his son, coming up with the main body, forced their way through, though not without suffering great loss and being thrown into considerable disarray. Scarcely had they passed, however, when, instead of five or six thousand ill-armed brigands, they encountered nearly three times that number of well equipped combatants, who, pouring down with levelled lances upon their disordered ranks, carried death and confusion into the midst of the royal army. The French knights fought well and bravely; but, thrown into disarray by the stones poured upon them from the hill, and charged suddenly by a body of men infinitely larger than they expected, they were speedily defeated. A number of noble gentlemen were slain upon the field; James of Bourbon and his son were carried to Lyons, mortally injured; and the archpriest, fighting to the last with determined courage, was at length taken by the adventurers, fainting under a hundred wounds.

The excesses of the free companions were not diminished by their victory; but approaching Avignon with the express design of pillaging the Roman prelates, they ravaged the whole country round, and, making themselves masters of several strong places on the Rhone, commanded completely the navigation of that river.*

The pope, now finding that, in endeavouring to purchase immunity, he had, in fact, only brought fresh attack, pursued a different line of conduct from that which he had followed when threatened by the archpriest. Launching the thunders of the church at the insolent adventurers, he proceeded to preach a systematic crusade against the assail-

* For the details of these transactions, see Froissart, chapters ccccIxii. to ccccIxix.; the Chroniques de France, chap. cxxxvi.; and D. Vaissette, tom. iv. notes, p. 576. From the comparison of these three sources I have drawn my inferences. The horrible state of France under the scourge of the great companies, is displayed in the writings of all the authors of that day; a number of whom may be found cited in regard to these details in the notes of M. Le Bœuf on the History of Charles the Wise by Christine de Pisan. M. Le Bœuf, however, falls into the common error of placing the origin of these companies in 1360.

ants of the Apostles' living representative, and the Bishop of Arras was ordered to collect troops and take the field against the audacious plunderers. The bishop's military talents, however, were luckily not put to the proof. Edward III., upon the representations of the King of France, took measures to diminish, as far as possible, the number of English who swelled the ranks of the great companies;* but a more effectual means of relief was offered by the Marquis of Montferrat. That prince was engaged in a desultory warfare with the lords of Milan, which the scantiness of his forces had prevented him from carrying on with vigour or success. He now offered the pope, on the receipt of a sum of money sufficient to tempt the cupidity of the adventurous leaders, to take the English free companies into his service, and to give them such employment in the wars of Lombardy as might engage them for a length of time to come.

The offer was too agreeable not to meet with instant acceptance; and a sum of money liberally given at once, with advantages and promises still more liberally held out for the future, joined to the certain prospect of abundant bloodshed, rapine, and plunder, easily induced the leaders of many of the English companies to enlist under the banners of the Marquis of Montferrat.† Though immense troops of such banditti still remained, the departure of the large body thus removed was an infinite relief to the whole of France; but especially to Avignon and Provence. The immediate likelihood also of a renewal of the war between the contending parties in Britanny—a war in which the aid of the great companies would undoubtedly be sought by each of

* Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 50. The pope had previously obtained forces from the King of Arragon.

† The account given of this event by Muratori, after mentioning the rise of the companies and the situation of the Marquis of Montferrat, is as follows:—"Passò (*i. e.* il Marchese) in Provenza, per condurre in Italia alcune di quelle che soggiornavona nei contorni di Avignone. Una ne incaparrò, chiamata la compagnia Bianca, e il Papa per levarsi di dosso quella bestial canaglia, e per iscaricare il mal tempo addosso ai contumaci Visconti, vi contribuo da centomila fiorini d'oro. Il marchese con si sfrenata gente, la quale, secondo la cronica piacentina, acendeva a diecimila tra cavalieri e fanti, venne in Piemonte."

the rival princes—held out a fair prospect of their final removal from the rest of the French provinces. The monarchs of France and England, wisely judging that the presence of two or three thousand plunderers, more or less, could add little to the evils of the unfortunate territory about to be wasted and ravaged by those who claimed the right to protect and govern it, made scarcely any attempt to oppose the progress of the free companions towards Britanny; and, indeed, it is very doubtful whether they really did all that it was in their power to do, to reconcile the jarring interests of the two claimants. The negotiations for peace between Charles of Blois and John of Montford, were from time to time renewed during the years 1360, 1361, and 1362;* and commissioners from both kings, as well as a papal nuncio, endeavoured in vain to decide their contending claims, or devise a means of tranquillity. The proposal of dividing the duchy between them was rejected by both; and though the truce which existed was prolonged, yet no approximation was made towards a final arrangement of their differences.† In the mean while John de Montford arrived at the period of life when he could legally take upon himself the control of his own person and estates; and in June, 1362, Edward caused all the towns and fortresses which he had hitherto held in Britanny to be delivered to the young duke.‡ De Montford had previously resigned the county of Richmond to John of Gaunt; and Edward now acquitted his former ward of all sums due by him to the English crown on any account whatever;§ but he, at the same time, adhered strictly to the treaty of Bretigny, and refused to take any part in the war between him and Charles of Blois, which was now inevitably approaching.

The latter prince had, in the mean time, endeavoured to strengthen his interest by every means in his power; and had given his daughter, with a large dowry, to Louis Duke of Anjou, the second son of the King of France.‖ But

* Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. pp. 40, 52, 62.
† Lobinau, p. 360.
‡ Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 60.
§ Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 61.
‖ Preuves de l' Hist. de Bretagne, p. 48?, August, 1360.

King John, whose scrupulous regard for his word is remarkable in every action of his life, adhered to his engagements with the same fidelity which was displayed by Edward, and would promise no assistance to the house of Blois in the war of succession. Charles of Blois next applied to the Count of Flanders, but in vain; that prince replying, that if he took any part in the dissensions of Britanny, it would certainly be in favour of his cousin, the Count de Montford.* These disappointments, as well as the formidable force which was speedily collected in favour of De Montford, induced Charles of Blois once more to enter into negotiations with his rival, and even conclude a truce at Châteauneuf; holding out the hope of a final peace, while in private he urged on his warlike preparations with the utmost activity. As soon as these were completed, the treaty of Châteauneuf was abandoned; and Carhaix was taken by the party of Charles of Blois, while the commanders in favour of De Montford† captured the castle of La Roche aux Asnes. Becherel, a small town on one of the highest hills in Upper Britanny, was next besieged by Charles of Blois, aided by the famous Du Guesclin, while De Montford marched with a large force to relieve it. He found his adversaries, however, so strongly posted that his only resource was in turn to besiege their camp, which he proceeded to do, conducting his operations with great skill and perseverance. At length Charles, finding his forces beginning to suffer from famine, sent a herald to the count, challenging him to lead his army to the plains of Evran, and there decide their quarrel by a general battle. The young De Montford accepted the proposal at once, and both armies marched to the place appointed; but here the exhaustion of his troops, and the remonstrances of some prelates who happened to be present, induced Charles of of Blois himself to propose a treaty.‡

* Guillaume St. André.

† It does not seem perfectly certain whether this small fort was captured by the partisans of Blois or of Montford.

‡ All these acts are omitted in Froissart, whose account of the transactions of 1363 is comprised in a very few pages—so few, indeed, that I cannot but believe that some part of his work must be lost.

After tedious negotiations, the terms of this treaty were concluded, and it was formally agreed that the duchy should be divided between the two claimants.* Rennes was to remain with the portion assigned to Charles of Blois, who stipulated, within a month, to yield Nantes to the other competitor. Hostages were given on both sides; and Charles swore three times on the Eucharist to observe a treaty which he broke within a fortnight, and which, we may well suppose, from such an unnecessary reiteration of his oath, that he never intended to keep.† A meeting was appointed at the famous midway oak between Ploermel and Josselin, for the purpose of ratifying the treaty, and stipulating the exact boundaries; but Charles of Blois never came; and though he prolonged the existing truce till February, at which time he agreed to meet his rival in presence of the English king or his representative for the time being in Poitou, yet it was sufficiently evident that he had not the slightest intention of adhering to his oath.

While these events were taking place in regard to Britanny, several occurrences had happened in England not unworthy of notice.‡ In 1361, the plague was once more brought into Europe, but confined its ravages principally to the higher classes of society. Amongst a number of distinguished persons whom it swept away, one of the noblest was Henry Duke of Lancaster, who died in March of that year, leaving two daughters: Matilda, married to William of Bavaria, son of the late Emperor Louis; and Blanche, the wife of Prince John, known by the name of John of Gaunt.§ Shortly after her father's decease, Matilda arrived in England to claim her portion of the inheritance, but she also fell a victim almost immediately to the same disease which had deprived her of a parent;‖

* Lobinau, p. 362.

† This base tergiversation of Charles of Blois, and his breach of the most solemn vows, are wisely omitted by the worthy witnesses who wished to seduce the pope into canonising him.

‡ Immediately on the conclusion of the war, Edward restored to the religious communities to which they rightfully belonged, those alien priories, the revenues of which he had seized many years before. (See Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 38.)

§ Dugdale, vol. i. p. 789. ‖ Knighton, col. 2625, 2626.

though malice, of course, did not fail to attribute her death to poison. As she left no children, the duchy of Lancaster, and the whole territories and feudal rights, held by the late duke of the King of England, were transferred to John of Gaunt, whose claim in right of his wife was solemnly confirmed by the king and parliament in November, 1362.*

In the same assembly, a variety of laws were enacted, and amongst others a number of those regulations in regard to apparel, the policy of which is very doubtful, and the inefficiency of which has been proved in all ages. Gold and silver, as ornaments, were forbidden to all persons who could not afford to spend ten pounds per annum; and furs, silks, velvets, and other expensive materials, were prohibited in the garments of those whose revenues did not amount annually to one hundred pounds.

Though the wisdom of such sumptuary regulations may be questioned, another decree of the English king about this time has a better claim upon our admiration. Hitherto Latin and French had alone been used in our courts of law: and a knowledge of the transactions in which they were most interested was thus shut out from a great portion of the people. It was now, however, enacted, that all pleading should be carried on in the vernacular tongue of England; and it would appear also, that it was originally intended by the king and parliament, that all the other legal proceedings, even to the enrolment, should be conducted in the same language.†

Edward III. had now reached his fiftieth birthday, and a jubilee was held upon the occasion. A general pardon issued, all prisoners and debtors were discharged; exiles were permitted to return; and Magna Charta was solemnly read and confirmed by the voice of the reigning monarch.

* Barnes, 625.

† My sole authority for this supposition is the assertion of Joshua Barnes, as I have not examined the record myself. His words are—"Only it is here to be observed, that although the printed statute touching pleading in the English tongue (chap. xv.) doth agree with the record, yet where the print says, that such pleas should be enrolled in Latine, the record doth nothing warrant the same."

Three of his sons, also, at this time, received new titles, and were provided with the means of supporting their station. These were Lionel, John, and Edmund; the first being created Duke of Clarence, and the last Earl of Cambridge.* Of John I have already spoken.

An event, however, more immediately connected with this history took place in the same year,† though considerably before those which I have just mentioned. The whole of the southern provinces of France, included under the name of Aquitaine, which had been ceded by John on the treaty of Bretigny, were given by Edward III. to his eldest son, with the title of Prince of Aquitaine. The document by which they are granted is certainly more poetical in its language than might have been expected on such a subject; but through the whole, both in words and in facts, is to be traced the affectionate admiration of the heroic father for his heroic son. The gift is free of all conditions except that of liege homage, expressed by an annual tribute of one ounce of gold, to be paid by the Black Prince to his father.‡ With this exception, and the stipulation that the treaty of Bretigny is to be held inviolate by the prince, the entire power and property of the King of England in those provinces is ceded to him by whose arms they had been principally acquired.

Edward the Black Prince did not immediately take possession of his new territories. During the rest of the year he continued to make great preparations for his voyage, and to arrange his affairs in England; and afterwards accompanied his father through one of those magnificent hunting parties, with which Edward III. occasionally entertained the court, and which were scarcely less splendid and costly than the tournaments and other military pageants of the day.

* Edward endeavoured for some time to bring about a marriage between his son Edmund of Langly and Margaret of Flanders, widow of the young Duke of Burgundy, who died in 1361; but his efforts were rendered abortive by the intrigues of the Court of France, which induced the pope to refuse the necessary dispensations.

† July, 1362. Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 66.

‡ Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 67.

On the present occasion, the monarch was attended by all his own family,* and most of the distinguished nobles of the land; and was accompanied by the French barons, then remaining as hostages in England, for whose comfort and amusement under the tedium of their honourable captivity† no endeavours that kindness‡ or good feeling could suggest were left unemployed. The hunting party visited in turn all the great forests of Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire, and Shropshire; and merry Sherwood once again rang to the horns, and echoed the tongues of the royal hounds.

After having spent many days in such diversion, the court repaired to the palace of the Black Prince at Berkhamstead, where, in the midst of festivities and pageantry, the monarch and his son took counsel together for the last time ere their separation; and shortly after, Prince Edward, with his beautiful wife, and a splendid suite of knights and gentlemen, set sail for Aquitaine. He arrived at La Rochelle in the middle of February, 1363, where he was met by Lord Chandos, his father's *locum tenens* in France, at the head of a large body of his new subjects, who welcomed him to their shores with every demonstration of joy, and all those signs of popular approbation which are lighter than vanity itself.

* Knighton, col. 2627.

† Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. pp. 42, 43.

‡ The hostages bound themselves solemnly to remain in the place assigned to them, without ever absenting themselves from their residence more than one day and night at one time. Edward, however, by the various letters to be found in Rymer, gave them permission to hunt and amuse themselves, within the limits of his dominions, sometimes for eight days, sometimes for a month, without any other guard than their own honour. Insinuations have been occasionally ventured by historians, tending to create a belief that he treated his prisoners and hostages with harshness; but every page of his public acts—the most certain bases for history—shows that on all occasions, where he had no reason to doubt the good faith of his captives, he treated them with the most generous and chivalrous courtesy.

CHAPTER XV.

PROCEEDINGS IN AQUITAINE.—CHARLES OF BLOIS AND JOHN DE MONTFORD APPEAR BEFORE THE PRINCE AS MEDIATOR.—CHARLES OF BLOIS EVADES THE PERFORMANCE OF HIS ENGAGEMENTS.—KING JOHN OF FRANCE TAKES THE CROSS.—THE DUKE OF ANJOU BREAKS HIS PAROLE AND ESCAPES TO FRANCE. —JOHN RETURNS TO ENGLAND AND DIES.—WAR RESUMED BETWEEN CHARLES V. OF FRANCE AND THE KING OF NAVARRE.—BATTLE OF COCHEREL AND VICTORY OF DU GUESCLIN.—WAR RESUMED IN BRITANNY.—DU GUESCLIN LEADS A THOUSAND MEN AT ARMS TO THE AID OF CHARLES OF BLOIS.—CHANDOS WITH TWO HUNDRED SPEARS JOINS DE MONTFORD.—BATTLE OF AURAY.—DEFEAT AND DEATH OF CHARLES OF BLOIS.—TERMINATION OF THE WAR IN BRITANNY.

THE first acts of Edward the Black Prince, after taking possession of Aquitaine, were all such as might be expected from his general character. Chandos, who had so well served him on every occasion, was immediately named Constable of the Principality; but to guard against the accusation of partiality for the English and neglect of the natives of the country, Guichard d'Angle, a knight of Poitou, who had ever been one of the most strenuous supporters of the French monarch, was named marshal of the prince's army. In the disposal of vacant offices, however, it is never possible to give general satisfaction, for, though the means of rewarding the few faithful and deserving of mankind is placed in the hands of him who has offices in his gift, the vanity and the selfishness of the great multitude must always be armed against the giver. Thus, in the case of the Prince of Wales, notwithstanding all the pains he took to avoid the imputation of partiality, the English and the Gascon party mutually blamed him; the one for giving any posts to men who had lately been his enemies, and the other for favouring his countrymen at the expense of the natives of the land he was called to govern.

In the midst of these jealousies, however, he undertook to mediate between Charles of Blois and John of Mont-

ford; and in February, 1364, they appeared before him at Poitiers. Each brought with him the hostages which had been mutually given after the negotiations of Evran; and John de Montford formally summoned his opponent to execute the engagements he had there entered into, professing his readiness to perform his part of the stipulations. Charles of Blois refused all discussion of the question; and John de Montford demanded from the Prince of Wales a minute of the proceedings in order to justify himself before the world. This was immediately granted, and the young count bore away from the conference a proof—not, as Lobinau declares,* of his adversary's levity alone, but of his despicable falsehood.† The hostages were set free, on both sides, with the exception of Bertrand du Guesclin, who was still detained by John of Montford, the historians of Britanny declare, without just cause. As the hostages, however, had been given by Charles of Blois, as pledges for the fulfilment of the treaty of Evran, it is only astonishing that De Montford liberated any, not that he detained one. Du Guesclin, tired of imprisonment, and seeing no prospect of obtaining his freedom by other means, effected his escape; and soon after joined the army of the King of France, then acting against the King of Navarre.

While such events were taking place in the west, John, though embarrassed with a desultory sort‡ of warfare with

* Lobinau, p. 362. Preuve de l'Hist. de Bret., p. 504.

† The procès verbal of the conference, drawn up at the time by a notary public, leaves no doubt in regard to any part of this transaction. De Montford states the facts in the presence of the Black Prince, and demands the execution of the agreement. The hostages, on the part of Charles of Blois, admit the justice of his statement; and Charles of Blois, instead of replying, declares, in dark and sullen language, that he did not come there to give his adversary any satisfaction on the question. De Montford calls the Prince and the nobles present to witness that no blame lies with him, and thus the conference ends. It is to be remarked that various efforts had been made previous to this period, both by Edward III. and King John, to bring about an adjustment of the differences of Charles of Blois and De Montford, traces of which are to be found in Rymer, A. D. 1362, 1363, 1364.

‡ At what time, and on what occasion, this war was renewed after the treaty of Calais, remains as yet in darkness. M. de Secousse, the historian of Charles the Bad, erroneously states that

the Navarrese party in Normandy,* took the cross at the exhortation of the King of Cyprus, who was engaged at this time in one of the last ineffectual efforts made in Europe, to stir up the monarchs of Christendom to a general crusade. The same prince addressed himself afterwards both to Edward III. and to the Black Prince; but though all the courts he visited received him with chivalrous splendour, and many sovereigns gave him hopes of their assistance, none was so much moved as King John, who bound himself solemnly to be at Marseilles, ready to set out, within a certain time.†

He was never destined, however, to execute his design. In 1363, Edward III. had consented that the four princes of the blood royal, who had been given as hostages for the fulfilment of the treaty of Bretigny, should be liberated upon certain conditions, which could not be considered hard, when the great risk incurred by the King of England in so doing was considered.‡ In the mean while the lords of the *Fleur de lis*, as they were called, were permitted to reside at Calais, from which town they had liberty to absent themselves for the space of three days, on condition that they returned before nightfall on the fourth.§ It would appear that great difficulties opposed themselves to the fulfilment of the conditions on which their liberation depended, especially in regard to the ransom of the king. At all events, the means used for that purpose proved slow and ineffectual; and the Duke of Anjou, the second son of King John, became not only impatient under the restraint which was imposed upon him, but perhaps a little jealous of his younger brother Philip, on whom his father bestowed, about this time,|| the rich appanage of the duchy of Burgundy, vacant by the death of the former duke with-

hostilities were not renewed during the life of King John; but Froissart, and the contemporary chronicles of France, distinctly show that active warfare had been going on for many months before the death of the king.

* Froissart, chap. ccccIxxvi.

† Froissart, chap. ccccIxxvii.

‡ Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 71. See also therein the papers which follow on this subject till the end of May, 1363.

§ Froissart, chap. ccccIxxvi.

|| Sept. 6th, 1363.

out issue. Under these circumstances, taking advantage of the permission to absent himself for a certain time, the duke effected his escape from Calais, in direct violation of his oath as a hostage.*

The mortification and astonishment of King John were beyond description at the base infraction of so solemn an engagement by his son; and he instantly took a determination worthy of his own high and chivalrous character. He called together the States General at Amiens, towards the end of November, in order to obtain the necessary subsidies for paying the part of his ransom still undischarged;† and at the same time he announced his determination of leaving the dauphin to carry on the war with the King of Navarre, while he himself went over to England to excuse or atone for the error of his son. Every one strove to dissuade him from such a step, but he remained firm; asserting his confidence in the honour and courtesy of the King of England; and he accordingly set sail from Boulogne for England on the 3d of January, 1364, with a train of 200 officers and their servants.‡

The King of France did not indeed return to England to surrender himself prisoner, as many historians have asserted; for in the first place he was not bound to do so by any principle of honour§ or justice, and in the next

* It is not possible to ascertain precisely at what time the Duke of Anjou effected his escape. The only apparent reference to the fact in the public acts, is to be found in a letter from Edward to his eldest son, in which he declares casually, that the treaty in regard to the liberation of the princes had been rendered void. (See Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 84.) The Duke of Anjou was followed or accompanied by several other hostages.

† Froissart, chap. cccclxxix. Spicelegium, p. 131.

‡ Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 84.

§ King John, by the treaty of Bretigny, merely agreed to give certain hostages, whose detention depended upon the care of the King of England. Edward exacted an oath from them, which they did not keep; and on the faith of that oath he had granted them a degree of liberty which some of them abused: but King John had in no shape bound himself to repair the want of faith of his hostages, or the want of precaution on the part of the English king.

We find it stated in the French chronicles, that John arrived in London on Sunday, the 24th of February, which would make him fifty days on the journey from Boulogne. But this is altogether

place he received letters of safe conduct from Edward III. beforehand,* by which his secure and unobstructed return to his own country was expressly stipulated.

His conduct in thus placing himself in Edward's power, nevertheless, showed that generous confidence in the King of England, which was calculated to disarm that prince's anger, and apparently it did so entirely. His reception was of the most distinguished kind,—a number of English nobles were sent to meet and conduct him in state to Eltham, at which palace Edward at that time held his court; and he was received by the English monarch in person, with all the honours due to his rank, and the affection which his virtues deserved. He arrived at the palace early on Sunday, where after dinner, which meal at that time took place about ten o'clock in the morning,† he was entertained by singing and dancing, in which amusements the whole court took part.

After some stay at Eltham, King John, accompanied by bands of minstrels, was conducted to London,‡ and met by deputies from the various trades, who joined the cavalcade that escorted him, and followed to the palace of the Savoy, which had been prepared for his reception. Here he kept his court for several weeks, holding frequent conferences with the English monarch, though the object of the negotiations which took place during his stay in London has not been ascertained.§ It is evident, however, that his relations

erroneous. The 24th of February, 1364, was not Sunday; and it is shown by the letters of protection, granted by Edward III. to the king's secretary, who was about to join his sovereign in England, that John had arrived in London before the 18th of January.

* Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 84.

† Christine de Pisan, chap. xvi.

‡ Froissart, chap. cccclxxx.

§ The most reasonable supposition in regard to the negotiations carried on by the King of France is, that they related to the crusade, of which he had been appointed general by the pope. This supposition has been rejected, on the belief that the prosperity of the crusade was not a matter of sufficient consequence to require the king to negotiate it in person; but the crusade, though, indeed, of little importance at present, was a matter of the deepest importance in that age. At the same time it is to be remembered, that having accepted the command of the proposed expedition, it became necessary to provide for the safety and peace of his domin-

with the English court became every day more and more friendly; and the principal part of his time passed in festivity and rejoicings.

Amongst other events which tend to show the deportment of Edward and his subjects towards the French sovereign, is one which at the same time proves the extraordinary height to which the commercial prosperity of the city of London had been carried, even at that time. The King of Cyprus had arrived in London previous to the coming of the French king, and David, King of Scotland, was at this time still in the English capital, to which he had journeyed on the pretence, or for the purpose, of a pilgrimage. During their stay Henry Picard, formerly mayor, and one of the Vintner's company, invited his own sovereign and his three royal guests* to a sumptuous banquet† at his dwelling in the city, keeping open house for all comers till night, with a degree of splendour and profusion, which in a prince might have been called extravagant. The mayor also, and several of the aldermen, invited the four kings, at different times, to magnificent entertainments; and John seems to have been treated as much as the guest of the people as the guest of the king.

Shortly after the arrival of the French monarch, Waldemar, King of Denmark, also visited England,‡ though the object of his coming is unknown.§ Thus, during the

ions during his absence; which objects might require, on many accounts, a personal conference with the King of England. One of the French chronicles, the continuation of Nangis, says, that John went over to England, *causâ joci*, an absurd libel, probably originating with the King of Navarre.

* Froissart states that the King of Cyprus had returned to France before King John set out from Amiens for the English capital, but Knighton is the better authority for what took place in London. It is proved also that the King of Cyprus, who quitted England to visit the Prince of Wales, did not reach Angoulême before the end of March; and therefore it is more than probable that he was really in this country during the sojourn of John in London, as we have shown that John was in England before the 18th of January.

† Stow's Survey, p. 87. Knighton, col. 2627.

‡ Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 719. Ed. 1830.

§ It has been supposed that Waldemar came likewise to confer concerning the crusade; and I also find it stated that the real ob-

spring of 1364, Edward entertained no less than four monarchs at his court, two of whom had been his prisoners in the course of former years. One of those monarchs, however, who from an adversary and a prisoner had become a friend and a comrade, was never destined to quit the English court. Towards the end of March, King John was taken ill at the Savoy, and after passing through a short but severe sickness, which from the first left little hope of his recovery, he terminated his career on the 8th of April, 1364.

He was surrounded by friends and relations; and though in a foreign land, and at the court of his great rival, he met with every kindness that could alleviate his bodily sufferings, or avert for the time the ultimate fate of all men

His danger was made known to the dauphin, and the tidings of his death following soon after, Charles assumed the style of king.* The body of his father was sent over from England, and conveyed in state to Paris, where it lay for some days, and was then deposited amongst the rulers of the past, at the Abbey of St. Denis. Immediately after the ceremony, the court took its departure for Rheims, where Charles V. was crowned on the 19th of May.† The peers who attended his father's obsequies served to give splendour to his coronation; the robes of mourning and of gladness changed like the mockeries of a dream; and the banquets of the funeral and the consecration took place

ject of the journey of the King of Scotland was to obtain a diminution of the sum imposed as a ransom, while the real motive of King John was to effect the liberation of the hostages. I have not given any of these suppositions, however, in the text, because I can discover nothing in the public records to justify them. In tracing the course of events, and endeavouring to dicover the perplexed falsehoods of which the great congeries of errors usually called history is formed (very often without being able to arrive at anything like truth one's self), I cannot but fancy that the spirits of the dead may, now that all the emptiness of posthumous renown is laid open to their view, stand beside the historian as he writes, and smile to see all the specious but unreal motives which he attributes to actions that they could explain by a word: and yet we must but too often venture suppositions.

* Chron. de France, chap. cxl.

† Christine de Pisan, chap. viii.

within a fortnight of each other:—such is the joy and sorrow of the world.

The war between the house of Navarre and that of Valois, after having lingered for some time in a state of great inactivity, had before this period begun to assume a more serious aspect on both parts. The famous Captal de Buch, who was distantly related to the King of Navarre, was called to head the armies of that prince; and the Maréchal de Boucicault, with Bertrand du Guesclin, whose gallant and indefatigable services in favour of the house of Blois had called all eyes upon himself, was ordered to lead the troops of France warring in Normandy. Before the captal arrived, Boucicault and Du Guesclin had made themselves masters of Mantes and Meulan by stratagem,* and had opened the passages of the Seine; but the bold schemes of the Gascon leader, who, arriving at Cherbourg soon after, marched forward in order to prevent the coronation of the young king, obliged the French generals to oppose him by measures equally active and energetic with his own.† While Boucicault remained at Mantes, Du Guesclin, having been joined by the Count of Auxerre, and several large levies, advanced in search of the captal, who, accompanied by an English adventurer named John Jewel, had arrived at Evreux, where his troops showed a muster of nearly three thousand men. No sooner did the Navarrese hear that the French were in the field than they quitted Evreux, and, marching towards the Pont de l'Arche,‡ soon gained intelligence of the enemy.

Both parties now drew towards Cocherel, where the captal took up a strong position on the hill, and soon after perceived the army of the French court approaching. Du Guesclin and his comrades disposed themselves for battle; but their force consisting almost entirely of volunteer combatants, without any authorized commander, the first question was, whose battle cry was to be used as a rallying word, and whose orders where to be obeyed? The

* 7th April, 1364.

† Christine de Pisan, chap. xxxi. Froissart, chap. ccccIxxxiii.

‡ Froissart says that the captal marched to the Pont de l'Arche by Pacy, which, it may be necessary to remark, was quite out of his way.

honour was first offered to the Count of Auxerre, as the highest in rank; but he, with that modesty which was inculcated as one of the chief virtues of chivalry, positively refused, on account of his youth, to accept such a distinction, where there were so many older and more experienced knights in the field. The command was then universally assigned to Du Guesclin; and two schemes were devised, the first for drawing the captal down from the height, the second for carrying him off from the midst of his men, as soon as the battle had begun. Both succeeded entirely. By the advice of Du Guesclin, the French army feigned to retreat in confusion. In spite of the remonstrances of the captal, John Jewel, with his adventurers, abandoned their position to attack the enemy. The French wheeled and formed, the captal was obliged to descend to support his ally, and the advantage of the ground was lost. No sooner was the battle begun, than thirty chosen men-at-arms attached themselves at once to the captal, broke through the press, in the midst of which he was dealing death around with his battle-axe, and pouring in upon him at once, overpowered him by numbers, and bore him off, notwithstanding his own determined resistance and that of his nearest followers. From that moment the fate of the battle was decided: the Navarrese lost heart and order; and though they fought individually with resolute courage, the day went against them. The pennon of the captal was soon after taken; John Jewel was made prisoner, mortally wounded; a number more were slain or captured, and the rest fled, leaving the field in possession of the French, though they won it at the expense of many of their best officers, and a large portion of their men-at-arms.

The victory of Cocherel established the fame and fortune of Du Guesclin, who immediately received the confiscated county of Longueville as a reward for his services. At the same time the young king showed a determination to use vigorous measures for the suppression of that licentious and turbulent spirit which had arisen in his dominions. The Captal de Buch, and all the subjects of other monarchs who had fought at Cocherel,* were treated

* Froissart, chap. ccccxcv.

with courtesy and honour, as well as those prisoners who owed any homage to the King of Navarre; but one noble, whose allegiance was due to France, suffered a just death at Rouen for bearing arms against his country, and the same fate was held suspended over the heads of several others.

Nor were his measures less active in the field. The young Duke of Burgundy, Du-Guesclin, Boucicault, and a number of good officers, carried on the war in Normandy with great success, though Louis of Navarre, with Robert Knolles, and other adventurers, somewhat counterbalanced the advantages gained by the King of France in the west, by their fortune in Auvergne. Acquigny on the Eure, Marcerenville, Camerolles, and Conneray, were taken by the Duke of Burgundy; but on the other part La Charité surrendered to the troops of Navarre; and it cost the French a great effort to wrest it afterwards from the hands of the captors.

In the mean time, war had been renewed it Britanny: John of Montford with a handful of troops had taken Sucinio and La Rocheperiou, and with an increasing force had sat down before Auray.* His numbers were swelled every day by the arrival of various partisans and adventurers,† while the chief supporters of Charles of Blois were absent waging war against the Navarrese for the King of France. Auray was thus in imminent danger: and the French monarch endeavoured to persuade De Montford to raise the siege and submit his cause to negotiation before him in Paris. To this De Montford assented, on condition that the besieged town should be placed in the hands of Clizon and Beaumanoir; the first his own adherent, the

* Lobinau, p. 369.

† Guillaume de St. André, afterwards a follower of John of Montford, states that Chandos was with him at this time:—

> "Là fut avec luy Clizon,
> Chandos, Latimer, et Felton,
> Et Quesnolles et Kaervalay," &c.

This could not be the case, however, as it is clearly proved by the transactions between Edward the Black Prince and Chandos, that at the beginning of the siege of Auray the latter was still in Poitou.

second a follower of the house of Blois. This proposal, however, was rejected, and De Montford continued the siege. Charles V.* now at once ordered Du Guesclin to march for the purpose of supporting Charles of Blois with the forces under his command, consisting of 1000 men-at-arms; while a number of other knights advanced towards Nantes with the same object. This was in fact the first virtual breach of the treaty of Bretigny; and we must pause for a moment on the character of the monarch who now occupied the French throne.

Charles V. was a man in whom the passions which animated his father and his grandfather seemed totally extinct, and who, happily for himself and for his nation, without being deficient in personal courage, had not one spark of that chivalrous fire which led his ancestors to commit many foolish actions. Although his careful prudence made him value the opinion of the world, he seems not to have had the slightest idea of any other principle by which a man may be induced to keep his word or observe his engagements than a just and reasonable consideration of policy. His whole thoughts turned to inquire what was most judicious, not what was most noble; and he at the same time possessed that deep insight into the characters of men, which enabled him to find without difficulty, and employ without risk, the instruments exactly adapted to the purpose he intended to effect. He was through life greatly favoured by circumstances, as all great men have been; but perhaps the secret of his success was this—that he never mistook the moment or the man. This clear-sighted prince at once perceived the danger of Britanny falling into the hands of De Montford, with all the concomitant disadvantages arising from the close connection of the latter with England; and he consequently ventured upon an act, for which he had a powerful motive, and which, though virtually a breach of his engagement to take part with neither of the contending claimants of Britanny, might be covered or excused by a thousand specious pretexts.

The arrival of Du Guesclin at Nantes took place towards the middle of the year, when he found Charles of Blois,

* Froissart, chaps. DI. and DL. c. Lobinau, p. 369.

and his wife, the Countess of Penthievre, already better prepared than he expected; the personal appeal of that weak and unhappy prince having once more roused a great part of the country to arms. The new reinforcement brought by the gallant Breton spread joy and confidence through the army; and day after day fresh succour arrived from different parts of France and Britanny, which soon swelled the forces of Blois* to four thousand men-at-arms, besides foot soldiers.†

Intelligence of the arrival of Du Guesclin, and of the strong muster making by his adversary, passed with the usual speed of bad tidings to the ears of De Montford. The siege of Auray was only pressed more vigorously; and the young competitor for the duchy instantly sent off messengers to his firm friend Chandos, setting forth the necessity of his situation, and begging his aid and counsel. He also caused it to be given out through England and Aquitaine, that a general battle must now follow between him and his opponent, and that all knights and gentlemen who loved glory and great deeds would meet with welcome and honour in his camp.

His appeal was not in vain: a number of English knights passed the sea to join the army before Auray;‡ and Chandos immediately applied to the Black Prince for permission to aid the young heir of De Montford. Edward had by this time received tidings of the succour afforded by the King of France to the rival claimant; and though he strictly adhered to the treaty of Bretigny, and took no part himself in the war, he permitted Chandos, as the terms of that treaty justified, to proceed to the aid of De Montford, with whatever reinforcements he could personally collect. These amounted only to two hundred spears, but the presence of Chandos was itself a host. The army of De Montford, after the arrival of all his friends, amounted to 1600 men at arms, and between 800 and 900 archers.§ The town

* Lobinau, p. 370.

† Froissart says that, on mustering his troops at Nantes, Charles of Blois found that he had 2500 lances from France alone.

‡ Froissart, chap. DI.

§ G. de St. André. Froissart, chap. DI. This proportion of archers seems very small.

of Auray soon fell into his hands; and the citadel, close pressed, began to feel the approach of famine, when intelligence of the march of Charles of Blois from Nantes to Rennes reached the camp of the besiegers. The forces of Blois halted for some days at Rennes; from which place they again marched to Josselin on the 26th of September, and thence on the 27th to the Abbey of Lauvaux, within a short day's journey of Auray.

In the mean while the garrison of the castle, impatient of the delay, lighted beacons on the highest towers, to give notice, to Charles of Blois, of the state to which they were reduced; and were answered on the night of the 27th,* by a billet shot into the place at the head of an arrow, informing them of the arrival of the army, and giving them permission to surrender if they were not relieved by the day after Michaelmas. The garrison immediately entered into a convention with their assailants, agreeing to surrender on the 30th of September, if De Montford were at that time still beneath their walls; and on these conditions they were supplied with food by the besiegers.†

About the same time De Montford sent a herald to Charles of Blois summoning him to perform the treaty of Evran, and offering to modify it in such a manner, that if he himself died childless the whole succession should fall to the house of Blois. The proposal only induced his opponents to imagine that he felt himself unable to maintain his ground; and the answer brought by the herald was a command to raise the siege of Auray, or to expect Charles of Blois to compel him to do so by force of arms within four days.

On the 28th of September the French force marched from Lauvaux, and soon appeared within sight of Auray, advancing in such firm and regular order, that we are told

* Lobinau, pp. 370, 371.

† Barnes states that the garrison had provisions for three months; but this is contradicted by all the Breton historians, who represent the defenders of Auray as suffering the extreme of famine. The account of Froissart, from whom the English historian has copied this statement, is not to be relied upon in regard to the battle of Auray, except where it is confirmed by better authority. Froissart not only mistakes the date, but many of the circumstances.

a tennis-ball could not have been thrown into their files without falling on the head of a lance.*. One single expression of Froissart in regard to their march shows, better than the most elaborate explanation could do, to what an extraordinary pitch the military spirit of that age was carried. He says that the English, who were upon the hill, and by this time drawn out from the town in battle array, took great delight in watching the fine order of the French as they advanced. It must be remembered, that these were enemies marching to attack them, and that the forces of Blois were nearly double in number the troops who stood upon the hill, and forgot the awful strife that was soon to take place, in admiration of the fair array of their coming foes.

As the French advanced and took up their position in the meadows, on the opposite side of a little rivulet, it became a question in the army of De Montford,† whether they ought at once to descend and attack the enemy, who were now weary with a march of nine miles, or suffer them to encamp. The latter opinion, however, prevailed, and Charles pitched his tents on the opposite ground. Several communications now took place between the two armies; and it would appear that De Montford did far more than could have been expected of a young and warlike prince to spare the effusion of human blood. He offered again to divide the dukedom;‡ and when all his proposals were rejected, he still urged the pause of a single day, in order to avoid violating the Sabbath by deeds of blood.§ These negotiations continued during the Saturday evening and part of the Sunday morning; and it is probable that they were principally conducted by Chandos on the one side and Beaumanoir on the other.|| They proved,

* Froissart, chap. ciii.

† Lobinau, p. 371.

‡ According to the account of Froissart, Charles of Blois had promised his wife on no account to consent to any partition; and William of St. André, a follower of De Montford, represents the adverse army as advancing with all the boasts and threats of men secure of victory.

§ G. de St. André.

|| This is all that I can admit of the account given by Froissart of these negotiations, as the whole of the rest is proved to be false

however, totally ineffectual, and both armies prepared for battle.

Several events are said to have occurred which the superstition of those times looked upon as evil omens for the cause of Charles of Blois. His sleep was disturbed by extraordinary dreams; a favourite white greyhound left him the morning of the battle and went over to his adversary; and a variety of other things took place which depressed his spirits,* but still he was resolute to fight; and is said to have declared, that all prisoners taken from the party of De Montford should be hanged without pity.† Whether he had really taken this barbarous resolution or not, there is a great body of evidence to show that an order was given on both parts to grant no quarter to the opposite claimant of the duchy;‡ but is is clear, from the events that followed, that, whatever were the directions given by Charles, no such sweeping cruelty as a general order to refuse mercy was ever contemplated on the part of De Montford.

That prince, finding that his enemy had determined to fight, notwithstanding the sanctity of the day, permitted the soldiers in the castle of Auray to issue forth and join

by testimony of eye-witnesses, and by documents, in regard to the authenticity of which there can be no doubt. Froissart represents Beaumanoir as a prisoner on parole, and speaks of Charles of Blois and his party as desirous of peace. In regard to the first, Beaumanoir had been one of the hostages on the treaty of Evran, but had been delivered long before; and so far from not being permitted to arm in favour of Charles, he fought and was taken prisoner in this very battle. See D. Morice, tom. i. p. 311. It is also clearly shown by the evidence of the partisans of Charles of Blois, that all the proposals of peace were made by De Montford; and that Charles and his party, confident in their own strength, looked upon the offers of the adversary merely as proofs of weakness, and rejected rudely every means of pacification. See Lobinau, tom. i. p. 372.

* Lobinau, p. 376. † G. de St. André.

‡ Such, at least, is the assertion of Froissart,—an assertion which the testimony of the witnesses concerning the canonization of Charles of Blois seems to justify. Neither Froissart nor the witnesses separately are much to be relied on in regard to the transactions in Britanny at this time; but when they confirm each other, or are confirmed by other accounts, I have adopted their statements.

their friends; and he himself, descending to a spot a few yards lower down the hill, arranged his troops for battle by the counsel of Chandos. The army of De Montford was divided by the English captain into four bodies of very equal strength. The first was commanded by the famous Robert Knolles, aided by several other English knights: the second by Oliver de Clisson, supported by a number of both Breton and English officers, amongst whom was D'Ambrecicourt, whose former exploits have been often noticed. De Montford himself, accompanied by Chandos, was destined to lead the third body; but in regard to the fourth a difficulty arose, which had nearly overthrown the well laid schemes of the English commander. This division, destined to act as a reserve, and to give its support wherever it might be necessary, Chandos had intended to place under the command of Hue de Calverly, one of the most experienced officers in the party of De Montford; but on being informed of this arrangement, Calverly positively refused to comply, demanding indignantly why he was not considered worthy to fight in the first ranks of the army.

In vain Chandos argued with him; in vain he represented to him that he had been chosen for that post on account of his experience and skill, as it was one which required more cool courage and judgment than any other. Calverly still looked upon it as a disgrace; and it was only when at length Chandos declared that, if abandoned by the officer to whom he had assigned it, he himself must take the command of the reserve, and leave the young count to his own guidance, that the other saw the great importance really attached to that office, and, mastering his disappointment, agreed to undertake the task.

On the other hand, the troops of Charles of Blois had been put in array by Du Guesclin, and had likewise been divided into four bodies; the first of which was led by that great general himself, the second by the Counts of Auxerre and Joigny, and the third by Charles of Blois; while the rear-guard was placed under the command of the Lords of Roye and Rieux. The ducal arms of Britanny were displayed in both armies; and both the claimants seemed to meet with a determination that that sun should not set upon

two living aspirants to the long-contested coronet. Each leader addressed his army; Charles of Blois asserting solemnly the justice of his quarrel, and De Montford beseeching his knights to tell him if there were one amongst them who doubted his right to the dukedom; for that he would rather yield all, than draw his sword in an unjust cause. He then embraced his principal officers,* and, after making the sign of the cross, kneeled down and kissed the ground in token of humility.

The army of Charles of Blois now began to move forward to the attack; and on the part of De Montford were heard, along the lines, the battle cries of the Bretons and English who supported him,—"Malo! Malo, for the rich duke!" "St. George for England!" while by slow degrees the two armies closed with each other in deadly strife. Both parties were on foot; their lances were shortened to five feet;† and at first the attacking body, which was that of Charles of Blois, had some advantage. Du Guesclin and his division encountered that of Robert Knolles: the Count of Auxerre attacked Oliver de Clisson; and the two rival princes advanced their banners at once against each other. At first De Montford was driven back. One of his cousins, armed like himself, as frequently was the case on such occasions, was mistaken by Charles of Blois for his rival, and was slain by that prince's own hand.‡ The cry spread that De Montford was dead; but at that moment the young leader, covered with the ermine coat of arms assumed by the dukes of Britanny, rushed forward to avenge his cousin; and a fight, very much in the style of those depicted by Homer, took place around the dead body. Nevertheless the division of De Montford was broken and driven back; and at one period of the battle his banner went down. At that moment, however, Hue de Calverly, who by his cool prudence and skill, during the engagement, well atoned for his previous heat and obstinacy, advanced to the aid of his friends, fell upon the rear of the French, threw them into disorder, rallied, and relieved De Montford; and then retreating to his former position, remained to

* G. de St. André.

† Froissart, chap. dviii.

‡ Lobinau, p. 373.

watch the wavering current of the fight, and turn his succour where it was most needed.

In the mean time, Clisson had been struggling with the Count d'Auxerre; and, though fighting like a lion, was making but little progress. The numbers in each division of the army of Charles of Blois were, compared with their opponents, as three to two. Clisson himself had received the blow of a battle-axe, which had dashed in the visor of his helmet, and blinded for ever one of his eyes. He was still, however, leading on his men, though it would appear that the day was going against him, when Chandos, whose presence of mind never deserted him, saw his situation; and no sooner found that Calverly's aid had given the advantage to De Montford's division, than, absenting himself for a moment from that prince's side, with a few brave men he poured in upon the rear of the Count d'Auxerre, and dashing all who opposed him to the earth with his battle-axe, cleft a path to the very centre of the enemy. Pressed by De Clisson in front, and broken by the sudden attack of Chandos in the rear, the division of the Count d'Auxerre gave way in every direction. The count himself was wounded by the stroke of a sword in the face; and as he was turning to seek assistance, he received a blow on the head with an English battle-axe, which made the blood start from his eyes and mouth in such quantities as to blind him. "Yield! yield! Sir Count!" cried a knight who stood near. "For the love of God do not let yourself be killed, but yield at once, or you are a dead man."*

The count followed this advice, and gave up his sword. The Count de Joigny was also taken; and that division being annihilated, Chandos returned to De Montford, who was pursuing his advantage against Charles of Blois. Here, also, the battle was soon won; the banner of the house of Blois fell; and Charles himself was seized and thrown down; when an English soldier struck his dagger through the bars of his helmet into his mouth, with such force that the blade passed out at the back of his neck.† The French were forced to recoil with great slaughter; and

* Lobinau, p. 373.
† Lobinau, p. 373.

a natural son of the fallen prince was slain close by his side. But through the midst of the strife and confusion, a poor brother of the order of preaching friars, who had for some time attached himself to the house of Blois, made his way to the spot, where he had seen the banner of his lord go down. He arrived in time to raise the head of the dying man; and holding up the crucifix, he called on him to trust in God, in that moment of mortal agony.* Charles understood his wish, and died in the effort to exclaim, "Ha! Domine Deus."†

In the mean while the battle swept on: a body of the English mounted their horses and pursued the fugitives, in order to prevent them from rallying; while Chandos, having seen the two first divisions of the adverse army defeated, hastened to complete the rout of a third, commanded by Du Guesclin. He found the French already

* It has been asserted that Charles of Blois was taken prisoner, and killed after the battle by order of De Montford; and as this assertion is made in a public document, by a great-grand-daughter of Charles, it is worthy of refutation. Lobinau, whose naive simplicity I often prefer to the more elaborate composition of Dom Morice, has proved (p. 374) that the statement of Nicole de Bretagne is false in many other respects; and the witnesses for the canonization of Charles, who were certainly no friends to his adversary, establish the falsehood of this assertion also. One witness, indeed, says that he had heard that Charles was killed long after the battle; but Geoffrey Rabin, the friar alluded to, and the thirty-third witness, states distinctly that he found him dying on the field of battle; and nobody can read his testimony, without perceiving that he had never heard a suspicion of Charles having been killed at a later period. The lives of Du Guesclin, as written by persons who were not contemporary, and as full of absurdities, must be rejected where unconfirmed by other authority, while the statements of Froissart, as a contemporary, and as confirmatory of the testimony of the Cordelier, may be admitted to show that the general rumour of the day attributed to De Montford grief for the death of his adversary, rather than the barbarous act of which he was afterwards accused.

† Enquête de Ch. de Blois, test. 30. It scarcely necessary to point out how beautifully these historical facts have been applied to the purposes of poetry in Marmion; for few can doubt that Sir Walter Scott, though very likely unconscious of whence the impression was received at the time he wrote the splendid scene descriptive of the death of Marmion, derived the outline of that magnificent picture from some imaginative memory of the field of Auray.

giving way, though Du Guesclin himself, and a number of others, were still fighting with desperation. We are told in the lives of the gallant Breton—the writers of which lives have indeed indulged somewhat too freely in the miraculous—that Bertrand had by this time lost sword and spear, battle-axe and mace; and did not surrender till he had no longer any weapon wherewith he might have prolonged the combat. He yielded, however, at length to Chandos,* who also made a number of other prisoners with his own hand.

The battle of Auray was now won. The French party were flying from the field in every direction; and De Montford was triumphant. As this result became every moment more apparent, the various victorious chiefs gathered under the shadow of a coppice; and planted their banners and pennons along the hedge above their heads, with the standard of De Montford floating above the rest. De Montford called for wine; and filling his cup he handed it to Chandos, who was congratulating him on his success. "My Lord of Chandos," he said, "this day's good fortune has fallen to me by your good counsel and prowess alone. Drink to me, therefore, I beseech you; for, next to God, I owe the victory to you." While he yet spoke, De Clisson arrived, bringing in a number of noble prisoners; and a few minutes after, two heralds and two knights, who had been searching the field, came to announce to the victor that the body of his enemy had been found amongst the dead.† De

* Froissart declares that Du Guesclin yielded himself prisoner to an English squire, under the pennon of John Chandos; but other testimony established that Du Guesclin was taken by Chandos himself; and, indeed, as it was considered far more honourable to surrender to a distinguished knight than to a person unknown, it is not at all probable that the future constable would yield to a simple squire, when so renowned a champion as Chandos was close by.

† I have given this anecdote as I find it in Froissart; inasmuch as there is no reason to believe that it did not happen; and because the chronicler of Hainault, whose propensity to anecdote was great, may be much more depended upon in regard to such traits, than in point of dates or distances, respecting which he is continually erroneous. His information, also, was from the herald who brought the tidings to England. In describing the battles through this work, I have found in the various contemporary wri-

Montford instantly rose, and proceeded to take a last look of the face of his rival. He found the corpse separated from the rest, and covered with a shield, which he caused to be removed; and after gazing on his face in silence for some time, he exclaimed, "Oh, Charles, Charles! Fair cousin, how many ills have fallen on Britanny, in the maintenance of your quarrel! So God help me, as I grieve to see you thus! Would that it might have been otherwise!" And thus saying he burst into tears, overcome by all those mingled emotions which such a sight, in such a situation, could not fail to produce.

Thus ended the battle of Auray,—a battle which may be said to have terminated the struggle between the houses of Blois and Montford. The loss on the part of the French was very considerable. More than a thousand men at arms died upon the field, in defence of the claims of Charles of Blois, amongst whom were some of the noblest in Britanny. Two counts, twenty-seven lords, and fifteen hundred men at arms, were made prisoners; while—strange to say—the highest account of the loss on the part of De Montford, does not carry it to twenty men at arms.* Auray surrendered immediately. Malestroit and Redon followed its example. Jugon, however,

ters, such a number of different statements in regard to minute points, that it would be endless to refer every particular to its authority in the margin, and useless also, unless I could at the same time display throughout the process by which my own mind was led to adopt one statement, reject another, combine two or three accounts, or draw an inference from scattered facts, which I need not say would be perfectly impossible in a work of this extent. I will therefore only add, that I have been guided, in regard to the battle of Auray, by the modern historians of Bretagne in some degree; but more by the testimony of the witnesses for the canonization of Charles of Blois, corrected by the chronicle of William of St. André, a contemporary; and aided by the statements of Froissart, and various public documents preserved by Dom Morice and Lobinau.

* Charles of Blois was one of the weakest and most superstitious of men, and ran the risk of being canonized for his absurdities. He was, not, however, without good qualities. He was liberal, humble, and affable; was brave, but irresolute; and might have been virtuous had he been firm. He is reported, however, to have been cruel; but cruelty and weakness, in man, are nearly synonymous.

held out for three days; and Dinan, encouraged by the assurance of support from France, resisted the arms of the conqueror for several weeks. That city fell also, in the middle of November;* and while the siege of Quimper was commenced and carried on, De Montford received envoys from the King of France, and the widow of his fallen competitor, offering terms of peace. Before he would even listen to negotiation, he pressed Quimper to its fall; and then, after numerous difficulties and interruptions, concluded a treaty at Guerrande, which secured to him the title of Duke of Britanny† and possession of the whole duchy, with the exception of a few inconsiderable territories ceded to the opposing claimant. On the part of Charles V. of France, who had promoted the pacification of Britanny to a certain degree, a long delay now took place in ratifying the treaty, which conveyed the duchy to one who had always been attached to the adversaries of France.‡ At length the ratification arrived; and John De Montford proceeded to the court of France, and did homage for the duchy, according to the ancient form used by his predeces-

* Some say October.

† Charles of Blois left three sons, but two were hostages in England, and the one who remained in the scene of contention was too young to assert the right of his family to the coronet of Britanny. The spirit of Joan of Penthievre also fell after the death of her husband; and she soon perceived that she had little to hope from the cold policy of the prudent but heartless prince who now filled the throne of France. Edward III. of England, on the contrary, supported his former ward zealously in all his negotiations; at once counselled him to do homage to the crown of France for the duchy of Britanny, and showed him that countenance which enabled him to act with vigour.

‡ It would appear that Charles, after having pacified Britanny by the treaty of Guerrande, delayed the ratification, to see whether he could not wring something from the eager desire which the young duke entertained to find himself in undisputed and indubitable possession of the territory for which his father and himself had fought so long. But De Montford was as prudent and as suspicious as Charles; and, guarding every step he took, with cautious circumspection, while the King of France delayed the ratification, he entered into a treaty with Edward the Black Prince, by which the Lord of Aquitaine bound himself to aid by every means in supporting the treaty of Guerrande. The news of this alliance, it would seem, at once determined the conduct of Charles V. of France.

sors. He then returned to Britanny, and endeavoured by every measure of prudence, frugality, and care, to restore tranquillity and abundance to a country which for twenty-three years had been torn by faction and desolated by civil strife.

CHAPTER XVI.

STATE OF ENGLAND DURING THE PEACE.—DIFFICULTIES OF THE BLACK PRINCE IN AQUITAINE.—CHARLES V. CALLS UPON EDWARD III. TO AID IN EXPELLING THE GREAT COMPANIES FROM FRANCE.—EDWARD CONSENTS; BUT CHARLES, ALARMED BY HIS GREAT PREPARATIONS, DECLINES HIS AID.—AFFAIRS OF SPAIN.—DU GUESCLIN LEADS THE GREAT COMPANIES TO DETHRONE PETER THE CRUEL.—HIS SUCCESS.—PETER FLIES TO EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE FOR AID.—THE PRINCE PREPARES TO ASSIST HIM.—NEGOTIATIONS IN CONSEQUENCE. —BIRTH OF RICHARD II.—THE PRINCE OF WALES MARCHES INTO SPAIN.—THE TWO ARMIES IN PRESENCE.—LETTERS BETWEEN THE BLACK PRINCE AND HENRY OF TRANSTAMARE.—BOTH ARMIES PREPARE FOR BATTLE.

THE pursuivant at arms who conveyed to Edward III. the tidings of the battle of Auray, and who was promoted to the rank of Windsor Herald in recompense, found the English monarch at Dover, treating actively with the Count of Flanders in regard to the marriage of the young Duchess of Burgundy, that prince's daughter, to Edmund of Langley, the fifth son of the King of England. Both Louis of Flanders, who was cousin-german to De Montford and Edward III., who had been his guardian, were of course well satisfied with the success of his arms, and great rejoicings mingled with their negotiations. The treaty between them was concluded with mutual good will, and the young duchess was solemnly contracted to the Engliah prince. The contract, however, as I have before mentioned, proved unavailing; the influence of the King of France was sufficient to induce the pope to refuse a dispensation; and after intrigues, obtained the hand of the heiress of Flanders for Philip of France, Duke of Burgundy.

Both as a support in case of war, and as a means of maintaining peace, Edward showed himself most desirous of strengthening his foreign alliances; and in 1362 and 1363 he negotiated a general treaty of alliance* with Peter, King of Castille and Leon, which afterwards led him into hostilities in behalf of that monarch, though such a result was not at all contemplated at the time. On the contrary, tranquillity seemed completely restored to every part of the world, except where the increasing companies of free companions disturbed the peace of many of the French provinces. In England, the king devoted himself to securing the happiness of his subjects, and to promoting the cultivation of arts and sciences. Various arrogant demands of the pope Urban, founded on concessions made by the weak and vicious monarch, John, were rejected by Edward and his parliament with a firmness which determined the question for ever.† Many tedious disputes, which had arisen between the four orders of mendicant friars‡ and the two universities, were set at rest. Several of the great law officers of the realm were severely punished for the maladministration of law; and everything in the records of those times speaks a careful exercise of the sovereign authority for the preservation of order, the equal distribution of justice, and the protection and benefit of the people. At the same time, arts and sciences received as much encouragement as was at all consistent with the manners and habits of the age. No good monarch or wise monarch has ever neglected a judicious encouragement of literature; and as one of the first signs of the decay of empires has been a neglect and abandonment of the elegant arts, so the promotion and cultivation of literature by the great and powerful of any nation has been a sure prognostic of a mighty advance in the relative position of the country. It appears

* Rymer, tom. iii part ii. pp. 60, 73. This alliance is said by some ignorant writers to have been sought by Peter; but there is full proof that the first overtures were on the part of England.

† Barnes, p. 670. March 30, 1366. Cotton, Abridgement, 102. The ancient tribute of Peter pence was also done away.

‡ The four orders of Mendicant friars were the Franciscans or Grey Friars, the Augustins or Austins, the Dominicans or Black Friars, and the Carmelites or White Friars.

very certain that Edward III. himself had no taste for poetry,* and that the language he himself spoke with the greatest fluency was the Norman French; yet there can be no doubt that he as fully estimated the advantages to be derived from the establishment of a national literature, as he did those benefits to be expected from the general adoption by the higher classes of the vernacular tongue. If we look at, and compare, the works of those poets who flourished during his reign, from the Hermit of Hampole to Robert Langland, John Gower, and Geoffrey Chaucer, we shall trace an immense progress made both by the English language and the human mind during the short space of fifty years; and if we examine the public acts in regard to our great universities we shall find that the efforts of the king himself were strenuously exerted to promote the cultivation of literature in his dominions. At this particular period, the fame of the English universities was very generally extended throughout Europe: we find that the right of studying therein was stipulated by foreign nations in their treaties of peace and alliance with England; and the reception and protection of students from other countries formed the object of many public orders.† Both the universities, also, were at this time greatly embellished and extended by the munificence of the king and of various private individuals; and the foundation of Trinity College, Cambridge, and of Christchurch, Oxford, is attributed to this period in the monarch's reign.

In Aquitaine, Edward the Black Prince had in the mean time a more difficult part to play. Independent of attachment to France, and ancient enmity towards England, a number of other causes combined to render many of the lords, whose territories had been dismembered from the state of which they had long formed a part, irritable and factious under the new domination to which they were now subjected. It was of course mortifying to the pride of a body of haughty men, who had formed an integral part of a great and powerful nation, to be suddenly reduced to a situation of isolated dependency upon a foreign country.

* Ellis, Spec. vol. i. p. 172.
† Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. pp. 53, 83, 87.

Many of the lordships, also, far removed, under the French monarchs, from the general seat of government, had for many years been ruled by their respective lords with uncontrolled and unquestioned authority, which was either endangered or diminished by the immediate presence of a sovereign in the heart of the principality. Added to these causes of disquietude were those before mentioned, arising from the distribution of offices; and these last were probably greatly aggravated by the proud and ostentatious manners of many of the English nobility, who forgot that the French nobles, conquered but not subdued, looked upon them with the irritable jealousy of unsuccessful rivals, whose memory was still full of enmity, and whose hatred was not yet without hope.

It is scarcely possible at present to tell how far the Black Prince suffered himself to be influenced by natural partiality towards his countrymen; but it is clear that no distinct act of injustice is attributed to him; and it is equally clear that, in the state of Aquitaine at the time, the presence of a large body of English men-at-arms was absolutely necessary for his own personal security, and for that of the territory granted to him by his father. It has, indeed, been argued that he should have trusted entirely to the Gascon lords; but their long-continued opposition, and their endeavours to evade the fulfilment of the treaty of Bretigny, fully show the necessity which was imposed upon him of maintaining a considerable English force to compel where he could not persuade. The most striking instance recorded of the many efforts made by the French lords to wring power or territory from the difficulties which beset the prince on all sides, is the resistance of the Count de Foix, whose unwillingness to do homage for the county of Bearn had not been overcome at the end of the year 1365.*

Notwithstanding all these circumstances of embarrassment, the martial renown of the Black Prince, and the careful and vigilant exercise of his authority, secured the whole of Aquitaine from many of the evils to which the rest

* Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 103. See, also, all the papers in Vaissette concerning the feuds between the Counts of Foix and Armagnac.

of France was still subject.* Within the limits of the principality, not one of all the multitude of plunderers which infested the dominions of the French king dared to show his head; and the nobles and citizens of Aquitaine slept in peace, while their brethren within the pale of France knew no respite or repose, from the sudden and daring expeditions of the free companions. To the number of these predatory bands, the pacification of Britanny had again greatly added; for a fresh body of soldiers, more inveterately accustomed than any others to the desultory habits of war, being at once thrown out of employment, had no resource but either to return to their own country, and seek a difficult and precarious livelihood by peaceful arts which they had probably long forgotten, or to join with the adventurers and pursue the same course of life that they had lately followed. The soldiers so long engaged in the wars of Montford and Blois almost universally chose the latter plan; and in the beginning of 1366, the number of the free companions in France was estimated at between 50,000 and 60,000 men—all bold and veteran soldiers, commanded by a number of skilful and experienced officers, whose personal fortune, and station amongst their comrades, depended solely upon their activity and exertions.

The excesses committed by such a body may easily be conceived; and the King of France, after attempting in vain to subdue them by force of arms, remonstrated loudly with the King of England, whose subjects the greater part had been originally. Edward, in his own justification, issued a variety of proclamations against them, and sent special messengers to their leaders, commanding them to quit the fortresses they held, lay down their arms, and return to a lawful and peaceable course of life; but the companies replied unanimously, that as they held nothing in England, and received nothing from the king, they would not at his mere word quit the places they had won with difficulty, and the mode of life they had chosen for themselves.†

* Froissart, chap. DXVIII.

† Barnes, p. 671.

Charles now called upon the English monarch to fulfil a clause in the treaty of Bretigny, which bound the Kings of France and England to co-operate in order to reduce these lawless rovers by force of arms; and Edward, immediately assenting, assembled a force, the magnitude of which alarmed the French sovereign more than even the presence of the companies. He immediately sent to decline the assistance he had demanded;* and while Edward indignantly disbanded his army, the pope and the King of France took council together to free themselves, by negotiation, from a scourge which they found it impossible to remove by force.† They first endeavoured to prevail upon the leaders of the great companies to enlist under the banners of Louis, King of Hungary, who, having allied himself with the Eastern empire for the purpose of resisting the Turkish hordes now pouring down upon Europe, required men of the bold and hardened character of the adventurers to oppose to the daring and skilful armies of the Ottoman. A vague suspicion, however, that the purposes of the King of Hungary were not fair towards them, induced the leaders to refuse to trust themselves in the difficult passes and barren wilds of which they had heard his country was composed; and the hope of removing them from France would have thus been frustrated, had not a new outlet presented itself in the confused and disorganized state of Spain.

Pedro, King of Castille and Leon, had in early life been affianced to the Princess Joan of England, who died before their union could be completed. He afterwards ascended the throne of his father, Alphonso, and married Blanche of Bourbon, sister to the queen of Charles V. of France; but with many specious personal qualities, such as eloquence, courage, and grace of demeanour, his severe, if not tyrannical, disposition soon called down upon him the hatred of Christendom. To detail all the base and cruel acts attributed to him by contemporary writers, or to investigate the truth or falsehood of the many charges brought against him, were equally tedious and out of place. Though the infamous character he soon established undoubtedly

* Walsingham, p. 178. † Froissart, chap. DXVII.

called upon him many a false and absurd imputation, yet there is much reason to believe that he was base, blood-thirsty, avaricious, and remorseless.* The chief acts of cruelty, however, the perpetration of which ultimately wrought his downfall, were the deaths of Eleanor de Guzman, of Blanche de Bourbon, and of one, if not more, of his father's natural children. The first,—though her faults were committed with a king, his father,—was undoubtedly as criminal as the concubine of any private man, but her error was not one cognisable by any law; and in every other action but her illicit connection with Alphonso, she appears in history as a woman of great powers of mind and of a generous and noble heart.

By her, Don Alphonso left three sons, the eldest of whom, Henry, Count of Transtamare, endeavoured on various occasions to stand between the nobility of the kingdom and the tyranny or severity of his brother Don Pedro, and, in his efforts for that purpose, became involved in disputes with the king, which ended in war. The party of the monarch, however, was victorious, and Henry, after seeing his military power at an end, fled into France, and served for some time in the French army. He was, according to all accounts, a high-spirited and chivalrous man, but, beyond all doubt, was also ambitious, remorseless, and subtle; and in his exile he ceased not to watch the state of Spain, while his brother, going on from evil to evil, obtained and perhaps deserved the name of Peter the Cruel.

The history of his career as usually given, and which we have no means of disproving, is as follows:—Enamoured of a woman of a fierce and daring spirit like his own, he had first neglected and then put to death his

* It has been asserted, and probably with truth, that one cause of the revolt of Peter's nobles was his severity and rigorous justice in punishing the atrocious crimes of which they were too frequently guilty; and it has also been stated that Don Henry was equally cruel and perfidious with his brother. The fact, however, remains undoubted, that Peter would have slaughtered in cold blood the whole prisoners taken at Najarra if the Black Prince would have permitted the act; and that he evaded the payment of those sums for which the Black Prince had become bound in his favour,—acts of cruelty and perfidy which leave his character beyond doubt.

unhappy queen, who died at Medina Sidonia in 1361. Contrary to law. he had sacrificed a number of the noblest gentlemen of Castille to satiate his avarice or gratify his revenge: he had despoiled the King of Aragon on account of the aid and protection which that prince had given to his illegitimate brothers: he had plundered and insulted the clergy; and had allied himself with the neighbouring infidel states. His quarrel with the church was the immediate cause of his first overthrow. Every order in the state was opposed to him; and the clergy soon found means to legitimatize insurrection, and procure the highest ecclesiastical sanction for working his downfall. Pedro was summoned in form to appear before the pope at Avignon, to answer for the crimes laid to his charge. He treated the notification with contempt, refused to answer, and abused the messenger; little anticipating that he was to be assailed at once by a general insurrection, the condemnation of the church, a popular and chivalrous rival, and an overwhelming foreign invasion. Unfortunately for Don Pedro, it happened that the indignity which he offered to the church of Rome occurred at the precise moment when the clergy and people of Castille were crying for relief, and when the King of France and the head of the Roman church were embarrassed with an immense body of licentious soldiers, of which they knew not how to dispose. Sentence of excommunication was immediately pronounced against the contumacious monarch by the papal court. His enemy, the King of Aragon, and his rival, Henry of Transtamare, were called to Avignon: a general treaty of alliance was concluded between them; and a solemn act of legitimization was obtained from Urban V., the reigning pope, in favour of Henry, by which that prince was declared capable of inheriting the throne of his father, pronounced vacant in consequence of the ecclesiastical censures under which Don Pedro lay.*

* The other monarchs of Christendom permitted this new stretch of the papal power to take place without remonstrance, possibly feeling aware that the rapid progress of society was daily doing away with that authority of which this was an undue exercise; and, in fact, that the papal jurisdiction was already so far at an end that it required a thousand concomitant circumstances to give,

To give these vigorous measures full effect, as well as to relieve France from the terrible scourge which she had so long suffered, Charles V. and the Roman pontiff determined to negotiate with the free companies, in order to induce them to support Henry of Transtamare in his war against his cruel and infamous brother.

It was necessary, however, in the first place, to fix upon some person, for the purpose of carrying on the treaty with the adventurers, and of directing their efforts after the treaty should be concluded, whose character and renown were sufficiently great to give perfect confidence to the leaders. The general judged most capable of effecting this double object was the famous Bertrand Du Guesclin, still a prisoner of John Chandos, who had taken him at the battle of Auray. The ransom demanded for the noble Breton shows the high esteem to which his chivalrous qualities had already raised him; and 100,000 francs were willingly paid by the pope, the King of France, and the aspirant to the throne of Castille, for the deliverance of a man who, not long before, had appeared as one of the poorest and most insignificant squires in the train of Charles of Blois.

The fame of Du Guesclin, and his frank and noble bearing, soon overcame every doubt which might have arisen in the minds of the adventurers; and they readily agreed to accompany him to Spain, on certain conditions, which were not difficult to fulfil, as they entirely referred to money to be distributed at once by way of gratuity, or to be paid afterwards as a regular salary. The pope, to the sums they demanded, added a general absolution, which spiritual treasure they, perhaps, still valued. A considerable body of French knights and men-at-arms was joined to the large force of the free companies; and the whole expedition was placed under the nominal command of John of Bourbon, Count of La Marche, cousin-german to the murdered Queen of Spain, while the real guidance of the whole was intrusted to the better experience of Du Guesclin. The general rendezvous of the troops was appointed

as in the present instance, any effect to the blunted thunders of the Roman church. Although we cannot but detest the character of Peter the Cruel, yet the means employed against him were certainly unjustifiable.

at Chalons sur Saone, in the autumn of 1365; and the companions, keeping their word to the letter, appeared ready in arms at the time named. The Breton general put himself at their head; and after marching past Avignon, where they obtained from the fears of the Roman pontiff 200,000 francs of gold, they arrived at Montpellier on the 20th of November.

By this time the fame of the expedition had spread throughout the whole of France, and it is impossible to describe the enthusiasm which arose, in that country, from the mingled feelings of joy at the prospect of deliverance from the bands of adventurers, and of pride in the hope of dethroning a cruel tyrant, and raising the renown of France in arms. Few, indeed, very well knew* what was the precise object for which such an array of armed men moved towards the Spanish frontier: but as imagination is always a much more brilliant painter than judgment, ignorance is generally more zealous than knowledge; and the people were not at all the less eager to engage, because they did not clearly understand for whom or what they were to fight. The enthusiasm was not by any means confined to France: through the whole of the principality of Aquitaine the same spirit was felt; and D'Ambrecicourt, Calverly, Sir Walter Hewet, Sir John Devereux, Sir Matthew Gournay, Sir John Neville, and several other distinguished knights, with a large train of men-at-arms, joined the adventurers under the command of Du Guesclin.

Notwithstanding the approach of winter, Du Guesclin began his advance from Montpellier on the 3d of December; and passing through Roussillon, reached Barcelona on the first day of the year 1366. Here he was joined immediately by Henry of Transtamare, and, marching onward, found that everything had been prepared by the

* This is proved by the curious occasional ballad called La Bertat, which describes, in glowing terms, the enthusiasm of the people, and gives a long list of those who accompanied Du Guesclin, but confounds Henry of Transtamare with the King of Aragon, and seems strongly to imply that Don Pedro was a Saracen: this mistake probably arose from its having been given out that the design of the expedition was to destroy the Moorish kings of Spain.

King of Aragon to facilitate his progress. The march of Henry was uninterrupted after passing the Ebro at Alfaro: he caused himself to be proclaimed king at Calahorra, and then advanced rapidly upon Burgos, in which city Don Pedro was endeavouring to collect an army to oppose him. But the universal detestation of his people now showed itself throughout the land. He endeavoured in vain to raise an army; few forces rallied round his standard; knights and nobles abandoned his court; and even the creatures of his will,* and the instruments of his pleasures, quitted him to swell the train of his rival. Only one noble of great influence, Don Fernan de Castro,† who had never courted him in prosperity, now adhered to him unchangingly in adversity, and accompanied him to Seville, whither he fled; and then, after vain efforts to rouse the people in his favour, and to obtain aid from Portugal, followed him to Galicia, a part of which, as well as some districts in the kingdom of Leon, still remained attached to his interests.

Don Henry in the mean while caused himself to be crowned at the monastery of Las Huelgas,‡ in the neighbourhood of Burgos, and found the great body of the people, nobles, clergy, and citizens, unanimous in his favour. Whilst he was proceeding to reward his friends, and by acts of justice and clemency to fix himself in the hearts of his people, a negotiation was going on which was destined to overthrow his power and blast his prospects for a time.

The alliance which Edward III. had formed with Don Pedro that monarch was determined to maintain in the most inviolable manner; and no sooner did he receive tidings of the movements of the free companies towards Spain than he issued§ the strictest injunctions to all the royal offi-

* We find that Don Diego G. de Padilla, grand master of Calatrava, brother of the famous Maria de Padilla, who from the king's mistress became his wife, was one of the first to abandon him.

† Supposed to have been the brother of the beautiful Inez de Castro, but I have many doubts in regard to the fact.

‡ The common histories of Spain are wrong in regard to the place at which Don Henry's coronation took place, which is proved by the narrative of one of his immediate followers to have been celebrated at Burgos, and not Astorga, as is usually stated.

§ Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 103.

cers in Aquitaine to stop them in their progress, and positively to prohibit every one who owed allegiance to the English crown from joining the invaders of the Spanish territory. His letters, however, issued from the court of Westminster on the 6th of December, by which time not only Du Guesclin and the free companies, but also Calverly and all the English officers who accompanied the French leader, were already on their march from Montpellier; and it is probable that the mandate of the king never reached many of the persons to whom it was addressed until the fate of the campaign was decided. Still it is very possible that intelligence of such letters having been sent, though it did not alarm Henry of Transtamare, who dismissed a part of his troops in June,* at least encouraged Don Pedro to solicit the Prince of Wales to remedy, by armed assistance, the evils which had befallen him from an invasion supported by English troops.† He accordingly sent messengers‡ to Bordeaux, charged with supplicatory letters, to which an answer, as favourable as he could desire, was speedily returned, and he himself set out for Aquitaine, with his son, his three daughters,§ and the friends who remained faithful to him in his adversity.

* Du Guesclin also, though he had been appointed by the new king Constable of Castille, and received several considerable estates in Spain as rewards for his services, soon after returned to France with his cousin Olivier de Mauny. It would appear, however, that he did not absent himself without a positive promise to return.

† Froissart, chap. DXXI.

‡ In a note on the chronicle of Don Pedro, the principal messenger is said to have been Martin Lopez de Cordoba, grand master of Alcantara; and it is probable that the grand master was the messenger, as we find his name attached to all the treaties between the Black Prince and the dethroned King of Castille. Indeed, the number of respectable names affixed as witnesses, on the part of Peter, to those documents, would seem to prove that he had not quitted Spain so completely abandoned by all his council and nobles as has been generally represented; and I suspect after historians may find cause to correct me for admitting so much against the former conduct of Don Pedro as I have done.

§ Froissart mentions only two daughters, and does not notice the son; but, in the bond by which Don Pedro agrees to pay the sum advanced by the Black Prince to bribe the King of Navarre, three daughters are distinctly mentioned; and it would appear

His reception was such as misfortune and distress might expect from Edward the Black Prince. He was received, consoled, and entertained at Bordeaux and Libourne, while messengers were despatched to the English king, to ascertain the line of policy, which that monarch might think it prudent for his son to pursue. In the mean time the eloquence and insinuating manners of the unhappy King of Castille won upon the affection of the Black Prince; and it is evident that, by the time the consent of Edward III. to the employment of English forces in the restoration of Don Pedro was known in Guienne, the prince was prepared to act with zeal and energy in the cause he had espoused. In reply to the remonstrances of some of his wisest counsellors, who warned him of the perfidy and baseness of the man he was about to restore to power, he replied that Don Pedro, whose faults proceeded from the pride of unchecked prosperity, had now tasted of misfortune, and had received it as a bitter but a wholesome medicine. He urged, also, the treaty of alliance which England had formed with the King of Castille in his days of good fortune, and pointed out that by that treaty his father was bound to act as a friend, but not as a judge, now that the days of adversity had arrived. The situation of the dethroned king with his three daughters, cast from the summit of earthly greatness to the state of an exile and a suppliant, was full of matter too touching not to create in a generous heart, like that of the Black Prince, a deep interest in the unhappy monarch's fate, while the fierce and somewhat greedy ambition which mingled with many fine qualities in the character of Henry of Transtamare might well make Edward look upon him as the usurper of

from the other papers that a son named Sancho was present also, though this is more doubtful. It may be as well to observe, that Froissart states that the Black Prince, without having answered Don Pedro's letters previously, was sending off armed vessels to bring him in safety from Corunna, when he arrived unexpectedly at Bayonne; but, on the other hand, Lopez de Ayala declares that an invitation from the Black Prince waited Peter at Corunna, and that he set out immediately. I have adopted an opinion between the two, from motives which would require too much space to explain, but which will be evident to any one who reads over the original papers, and the narrative of the two chroniclers.

his brother's throne, rather than the deliverer of his native country.

No sooner was the consent of the King of England known at Bordeaux* than immediate consultations were held in regard to the steps to be taken for the restoration of Don Pedro; and, in the first place, in order to secure free ingress and regress of the territory about to become the scene of contention, an alliance was proposed with Charles the Bad, King of Navarre, whose territories commanded the most convenient passes in the Pyrenees. Charles the Bad had previously entered into a treaty with Henry of Transtamare; but that fact proved no obstacle with a prince of his character; and his negotiations with the Prince of Wales and Don Pedro were carried on with all the rapidity that the occasion required. The passage through his territories was, in fact, bought by Don Pedro at the price of 56,000 florins of gold, which were advanced by the Black Prince; and a general treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive,† was entered into between the young Lord of Aquitaine, the King of Navarre, and the dethroned monarch of Spain;‡ by which extraordinary territorial cessions, and a farther recompense in money,§ were promised to the infamous sovereign of Navarre. To the Prince of Wales were ceded the whole of the province of Biscay,‖ and a number of smaller lordships and territories;¶ besides which, Don Pedro engaged to pay the British troops employed in his service, though the Black Prince

* Froissart, chaps. DXXIII. DXXIV.

† Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. pp. 115, 116.

‡ This convention, certainly one of the most extraordinary extant, is to be found in Rymer. It is, however, not a little difficult to translate, being partly written in bad French, partly in bad Spanish, and partly in bad Latin.

§ The treaty specifies *Docientas vezez mil florenes*, which Monsieur Dacier has translated *Deux cent vingt mille florins.* That gentleman apparently did not understand Spanish; for though the expression is a curious one, it evidently means 200,000.

‖ Some of the state papers, referring to these transactions, seem to imply that the territorial cessions made by Pedro were intended as security for the immense amount of money advanced by the Black Prince.

¶ Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. pp. 120, 121.

became bound for the discharge of their wages.* Before the conclusion of this treaty the personal interest taken by the King of England in the restoration of Don Pedro was displayed in the fitting out of a considerable armament to be sent as a reinforcement to join the army which the Prince of Wales was collecting in Aquitaine. The troops thus raised were instantly despatched to France† under the command of John of Gaunt, the young Duke of Lancaster; and, arriving before the King of Navarre had acceded to the alliance with England, they very likely determined the conduct of that prince by the formidable military power which their coming enabled Don Pedro to bring into the field.

The prospective gratitude of Don Pedro for the assistance of the Prince of Wales was unbounded; and, besides the more substantial signs of his sense of obligation, which he showed towards his benefactor, he granted to the kings of England and princes of Wales a singular military privilege, namely, that of commanding the first battle or avantguard of the Spanish armies engaged against the infidels; binding himself and his successors also to cause a banner of the arms of England to be borne always in the avantguard, whether the English king or his eldest heir, for the time being, should be present or not. Other privileges and concessions were granted; and certainly some extraordinary recompense was well deserved by the extraordinary exertions of the Prince of Wales. The difficulties of treating with the King of Navarre were great; but, when these were overcome, many more remained to be vanquished. One of the most important of these was certainly the presence of the free companions—amongst whom were

* In order to raise the sums necessary to enable the army even to march from Bordeaux, the Black Prince was obliged to break up the greater part of his plate. Froissart, chap. DXXVI.

† The manuscript acts of the Black Prince, cited by Barnes, place the first arrival of the young Duke of Lancaster in Aquitaine, after Edward had begun his march, in 1367; but we find his name as a witness attached to the treaties signed at Bordeaux, in September, 1366, and, therefore, can admit no other authority to weigh against such a proof, although it is possible that the duke might visit both Bordeaux and England more than once in a period of four months.

at least 30,000 veteran Englishmen—in the armies of Henry of Transtamare, who, allied with the King of Aragon, supported by the King of France, and upheld by the love of a great majority of his people, bade fair to bring a host into the field which might set at defiance all the forces of the Black Prince.

The first efforts, therefore, of Edward, were directed to recall the adventurers, who had joined the adverse competitor for the Castillian throne, contrary to the will of the English monarch.* The great name of the Black Prince alone was in itself sufficient to affect, in a powerful manner, the minds of the companions.† All the knights who had joined Don Henry on his first invasion of Castille were immediately recalled to Aquitaine, and instantly obeyed; and more than 10,000 men of the great companies came over at once, and made the best of their way to effect their junction with the prince's army. No sooner, however, did Don Henry obtain a clear knowledge of their defection, and the purpose of their march towards Aquitaine, than he endeavoured, by every means in his power, to close the passes of the country against them. His ally, the King of Aragon, denied them a passage through his country: the French governors throughout Languedoc prepared to waylay them on their march; and the Count de Foix, though a vassal of the Black Prince, refused to grant the adventurers a passage through his lands, alleging as his excuse the crimes and aggressions they had committed in other countries. His opposition, however, was soon removed by the persuasions of Chandos; and those divisions of the army that took the road of Bearn were permitted to pass on their march into Aquitaine.

The other bodies, however, encountered great difficulties. The King of France was doubly interested in preventing their return to his dominions, and in forcing them to remain in Spain; and the corps which took its way by Languedoc was met and opposed by the Seneschal of Toulouse with a very superior force. After pausing for several days in Montauban, in hopes of avoiding the encounter, the companions, having received some considerable reinforce-

* Froissart, chap. DXXV. † Barnes.

ments, issued forth, and a battle took place under the walls of the town, in which the French troops were completely routed by the adventurers, and the Seneschal de Toulouse, the Count of Narbonne, and 100 other knights, were made prisoners.* The companies then marched on without farther interruption; and a body of between 10,000 and 12,000 men were thus added to the forces which the Black Prince was collecting at Bordeaux and Libourne. No means were left unemployed, during the autumn of 1366, to increase those forces; and so eager and zealous were the lords of Gascony in the service of the prince, that it was at length discovered that a much larger army would be collected than the finances of the prince could enable him to pay. Under these circumstances, Edward was obliged to signify to some of the leaders, that a smaller contingent than that which had been required at first would be sufficient; and no difficulty seems to have occurred on the part of any one but the Lord of Albret, whose family had been for ages allied with the English monarchs. He, however, having agreed at first to bring a thousand spears into the field, would not consent to a diminution of the number; and insisted, in somewhat haughty terms, that the prince should accept or refuse the services of all.

Edward replied indignantly; and a discussion ensued, which alienated for ever the Lord of Albret from the interest of England. On the present occasion the dispute was terminated by the intervention of the Count D'Armagnac, whose prudence moderated the heat of his nephew D'Albret, and appeased the Prince of Wales. The refractory noble consented with an ill grace to serve with two hundred lances in the prince's army; and the Count de Foix, who, it would appear, had been also called upon to take the field, yielded far more readily to the wishes of Edward, and agreed to remain in the principality, and guard it against attack.

Before Christmas the preparations of the Black Prince were complete; but his departure from Bordeaux was delayed for some weeks, in order to allow the severity of the winter to pass ere he began his march. It is not improba-

* D. Vaissette, tom. iv. p. 332. The combat lasted six hours.

ble that other motives of a personal nature likewise tended to make him pause. The princess was not far from the time of her confinement; and the deep and unaltered affection that existed between her and her husband might render him anxious to be near her on such an occasion.* He of course yielded to the desire more readily, as there existed many specious reasons for a temporary delay, which promised not only an easier entrance into Spain, but an aspect more favourable for the expedition in the internal affairs of the country.

The high tide of popularity, which had carried Don Henry to the summit of power, was now beginning to ebb, and to leave him amidst the many shoals and quicksands that surround ambition. The companions who had brought him back in triumph to Castille had partly left him to join his adversary, partly dispersed to exercise their wonted depredations upon the people of the land. Where there were many claimants for recompense and reward, and little to be divided amongst them, there were of course many disappointed; and those whose expectations were the least just were the most angry at rejection. Nevertheless the party of Henry was still extremely strong. Du Guesclin was busily employed in levying troops for the service of that prince in France; and the King of Navarre was once more negotiating with him in the hope of obtaining greater advantages by breaking his faith with the Prince of Wales than by keeping it inviolate.

At length, on Twelfth-day, 1367, the Princess of Wales —whose eldest son by the Black Prince was of a feeble and delicate constitution—was brought to bed of another prince, who, before long, became King of England, under the name of Richard II.† A few days after the birth of his child, Edward, having seen his wife so far recovered as to remove all probability of danger, began his march for Spain. A great part of the army had before advanced as far as Dax‡ upon the Adour; and a body of adventurers,

* Froissart, chap. DXXXI.

† He was baptized by the Archbishop of Bordeaux before the departure of his father, being held at the font by the King of Majorca and the bishop of Agen.

‡ I have before noticed the assertion of Barnes, copied from the

under the command of Hugh de Calverly, had been pushed forward to the very frontiers of Navarre. Increasing rumours, however, reached the prince's army, importing that Charles the Bad had once more concluded a treaty with Don Henry; and these rumours were confirmed by the demeanour of the governors of the frontier towns, who showed no disposition to suffer the army of the prince to pass, as had been stipulated by the former treaty.

Sir Hugh de Calverly, however, and the free companies under his command, were not very ceremonious in their manner of enforcing the fulfilment of the King of Navarre's engagements: and finding some opposition to their advance offered at Mirande, and Pont la Reine, then possessed by Charles the Bad, they attacked and captured those places sword in hand, and prepared to take possession of the passes by force. This conduct soon brought remonstrances from the King of Navarre, which being treated by the prince with the dignified contempt that his tergiversation well merited, were followed by humbler excuses and a renewal of his engagements.

Much time was wasted in these negotiations; but at length every difficulty was removed; and on the 17th of February the armies approached the Pyrenees, by St. Jean Pied de Port and Arneguy. To pass 30,000 cavalry through the fearful gorge of Roncesvalles, in the midst of the winter, when new mountains of snow and ice are piled upon the mountains which interpose, at all times, a gigantic barrier between France and Spain, was in itself a great and dangerous undertaking. Its dangers, however, would have

Cambridge manuscript, that the Duke of Lancaster did not join his brother till the Black Prince was on his march. This is confirmed by Froissart, chap. DXXXIII, who names Dax as the place of their first meeting. Froissart was in Bordeaux at the time, and was probably right; but as the name of the Duke of Lancaster is attached as a witness to the treaties signed in the neighbourhood of Bordeaux in September, 1366, it is more than probable that in the interval between the signing of those treaties in September, and the march of the prince in January of the following year, the Duke of Lancaster had returned to England, and once more hastened back to join his brother on his march; which supposition is confirmed by a paper signed by Edward III. on the 20th of October, 1366, which implies that the duke was then in England.

been greatly increased, had the treacherous monarch of Navarre been suffered to make use of the opportunity thus afforded him as he pleased. But this was not the case. The prince had demanded that he should be present as a friend, with that army, to which he might have behaved as an enemy if absent; and he remained with his allies: the pretext of showing the way through the defiles, covering the less dignified cause of his still continuing with the English forces.

The army passed in three divisions: the first commanded by the Duke of Lancaster and John Lord Chandos; the second by the prince and Don Pedro; and the third by the King of Majorca, with the Count of Armagnac. Each division passed on a separate day; and during the march of the prince, the violent gusts of wind, sweeping through the dark and desolate gorges of the mountains, continually involved him and his glittering chivalry in clouds of snow. No serious accident, however, occurred; and on the 20th of February the Black Prince stood at the head of his forces, on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees.

The previous movements of the Prince of Wales had been all noted by Don Henry, who at first affected to despise them; but he now found it necessary to prepare more seriously to resist in arms a commander, who had as yet seen every adverse banner fall before his own, and who was now marching on towards the heart of Spain, followed by 30,000 veteran soldiers. Bertrand Du Guesclin, one of the best officers of the age, was indeed already on his way to support the prince whom he had established, accompanied by a large body of men levied in France; and the very first general summons of Don Henry brought 60,000 Castillians to his side. With this latter force, Henry advanced to join Du Guesclin, and to give battle to the Prince of Wales; and so rapidly was his march executed, that the adverse army had scarcely passed the frontier ere he was prepared to oppose its farther progress.

Step by step with the Prince of Wales, and within a few miles of his line of march, Du Guesclin had advanced through Aragon, keeping up, it would appear, a secret correspondence with the King of Navarre, who, forced to accompany the English army, and yet unwilling to en-

counter Henry of Transtamare in the field, soon contrived* to get himself taken prisoner, while on a hunting party, by a detachment of troops from the French army.

On the confines of Navarre, Biscay, and Old Castille, the Prince of Wales first received intelligence of the near approach of the Castillian army; and, while he directed his march upon Biscay, and made himself master of Salvatierra, he commanded Sir Thomas Felton, with a considerable force, to advance by Logroñe, and endeavour to obtain correct information concerning the position and motions of the enemy. He was not long in gaining all the intelligence he could desire; and having made a number of prisoners in a camisade upon the quarters of Don Henry, on the Castillian side of the Ebro, he instantly sent off messengers to the Prince of Wales, giving him tidings of all that he had thus learned.

Henry, in the mean while, struck his tents, and crossed the Ebro;† and the Black Prince at the same time quitted Salvatierra, and advanced upon Vittoria, whither Sir Thomas Felton also hastened to effect his junction with the rest of the English forces.

The outposts of the two armies fell in with each other at Vittoria, immediately after the Black Prince had reached that spot, and before the rear-guard of his army had appeared. Edward, doubting not that he would be instantly attacked, took up the strongest position he could find, and prepared to fight without the division under the command of the King of Majorca. But Henry of Transtamare had by this time received intelligence of the near approach of Du Guesclin, and wisely determined to delay the battle till he could obtain the advice and assistance of that experienced officer. The day thus passed over; and the fol-

* This Froissart states to have been the general opinion at the time; and we find that, very shortly afterwards, the King of Navarre rewarded Oliver de Mauny, his captor, with considerable territories; which would seem to infer that he had not greatly disobliged the Navarrese prince by making him a prisoner in his own dominions. The captor of the king was, as far as I can discover, no relation of the famous Sir Walter de Mauny. The same account as the above is given by Ayala. See Ayala, ano 18, capitulo 1.

† Froissart, chap. DXL. L. de Ayala.

lowing morning, by the gray of dawn, the quarters of the prince were beat up by Don Tello, the brother of Henry of Transtamare, who, after having caused some confusion, and induced the English commander to draw out his force in battle array, retreated with little loss. In returning to the camp, he fell in with the party of Sir Thomas Felton, who had been thrown forward to reconnoitre once more; and as the Spaniards amounted to the number of 6000, while the English party did not consist of more than 200, it may easily be supposed, that in the skirmish which ensued, Felton and his companions were totally defeated. The English, however, did not lose the field till they had sustained a long struggle, more honourable to their courage than to their prudence.*

Another day passed over without any farther movement on the part of the Spaniards. A want of provisions began to be severely felt in the English camp; and the Black Prince, finding that he could not count upon any supplies from the faithless King of Navarre, struck his tents, and marched down the Ebro to Viana, and thence to Navarretta, a small village on the very frontiers of Navarre. Henry of Transtamare followed rapidly; and although he was strongly advised by the Maréchal d'Audenham† to avoid a battle, and endeavour to cut off all supplies from the camp of the Black Prince, he rejected such prudent counsel, and prepared to risk his crown upon a general engagement.

Scarcely had the Prince of Wales encamped at Navarretta, when Don Henry arrived at Najarra, at which place there was then apparently a royal palace. The little river Najarrilla alone separated the two armies; and a

* The biographers of Du Guesclin, though contradicted by all the best contemporary authorities, represent him as taking an active part in this skirmish, and killing Felton with his own hand. It is scarcely necessary to say, that the account of Menard, and those who have copied him, is perfectly unfounded. Du Guesclin himself was not present at the skirmish, nor, in all probability, with the Spanish army at the time, although Froissart speaks of him as present on the return of Don Tello.

† This advice is placed by the Breton historians in the mouth of Du Guesclin, but without any proof whatever; while Froissart and other contemporary authors represent the conduct of Du Guesclin as far less prudent upon the present occasion.

battle now seemed inevitable. To bring the matter to a speedy decision, however, Edward, on the 1st of April, sent* letters to his adversary, calling upon him in mild, but firm and dignified language, to return to obedience, and resign the throne he had usurped, but offering, at the same time, to act as mediator between him and his brother, and do all in his power to remove difficulties and abuses. Henry replied haughtily, and, confident in his own strength, prepared for immediate battle.

The forces of the two armies were very unequal: Edward had entered Spain with about 30,000 men; and we find the different bodies of which the adverse force was

* Rymer, tom: iii. part ii. pp. 131, 132. Froissart gives three letters, Rymer two, differing from each other altogether. Some persons have supposed that the correspondence, as afforded by both those authorities, is authentic, and that the letters given by Froissart were followed by those in Rymer. This, however, cannot be the case; for not only is the tone of them throughout totally different, but those preserved in the state papers make no reference to any other epistles, and recapitulating the whole transactions in regard to Don Pedro and Henry of Transtamare, leave no possibility, by the terms they use, of other letters having passed before. The matter of these letters, also, has been grossly misrepresented by various historians. Rapin says, that the Black Prince, to provoke Henry to a battle, sent him a very insulting defiance. It was not in the nature of the Black Prince to offer an insult to any one; and his letter to Henry is couched in the mildest terms that such a document could display. After stating the facts of the dethronement of Don Pedro by his brother, and the obligation which the King of England thought himself under to restore the King of Castille, he proceeds to say, "Y porende vos rogamos y requerimos de parte de Dios y del martyr Sant Jorge, que, si vos plaze, que nos seamos Medianeros buenos entre el rey Don Pedro y vos, que vos nos lo hagays saber. Y nos trabajaremos que vos ayades en los sus regnos, y en su buena gracia y merced, tan gran parte por que honradamente podades bien passar y mantener vestro estado. Y se algunas cosas huviere menester delibrar entre el y vos, nos con la merced de Dios, entendemos poner las cosas en tal estado como seades bien contento."

Doubtless, the prince did not expect that any letter, however mild its language, would induce a prince with a vastly superior army to resign his advantage and yield the throne he possessed when there was every chance of his maintaining it with glory; but still his letter to Don Henry (which, from the date, is the last as well as the first that could have been sent on his part,) was anything but an insulting defiance.

composed, thus enumerated by Froissart, whose account in this respect has not been materially impeached.* Three thousand men-at-arms, mounted on horses covered with iron, 20,000 men-at-arms on unarmed horses, 6000 light cavalry, 10,000 crossbow-men, and 60,000 foot, armed with lances and assagayes, formed the army of Don Henry; but on the part of the English were skill, experience, the memory of many victories, and a commander who had never been vanquished.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BATTLE OF NAJARRA.—DON HENRY TAKES REFUGE AT AVIGNON.—EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE PREVAILS UPON PETER THE CRUEL TO SPARE THE LIVES OF THE PRISONERS.—DON HENRY MAKES AN INCURSION INTO AQUITAINE, AND TAKES BAGNERES.—DECEITFUL CONDUCT OF PETER THE CRUEL.—A PESTILENCE IN THE CAMP OF THE BLACK PRINCE.—HIS ILLNESS.—RETIRES FROM SPAIN.—HIS GENEROUS CONDUCT TOWARDS HIS UNGRATEFUL ALLY.

THE night preceding the 3d of April the two armies lay in the field, though Don Henry lodged in the palace of Najarra, and the Black Prince in the small deserted village of Navarretta. The soldiers of each host retired to rest early, as the leaders on both sides had determined to begin the battle by daybreak. Everything was accordingly arranged during the evening; and the dispositions of the Black Prince were simply to advance against the enemy, with his army formed in three divisions, as it had passed

* Froissart makes Henry, at two differant times, state the numbers of which his army consisted in a very different manner. In the first place, he declares that there are in his host *seven* thousand men-at-arms on chargers covered with steel, 20,000 men-at-arms on lighter horses, and 60,000 foot. Chapter DXLIV. Ayala mentions four thousand five hundred men-at-arms on the part of Don Henry, besides a number of others from three provinces, including Biscay and the Asturias, together with the great companies, and a very great body of which would seem to imply that his force was even greater than that stated by Froissart.

the Pyrenees. Exactly the same order also was adhered to, as that which had been observed on the former occasion, the first division being commanded by the Duke of Lancaster and Chandos; the second by the prince in person, and Don Pedro, and the third by the King of Majorca, with a number of gallant gentlemen, both of England and Aquitaine. The arrangements of Don Henry were equally simple, though not so judicious, as his troops were divided into bodies of numbers so unequal, that in the first division, commanded by Du Guesclin, there were only 4000 men-at-arms; while in the second, led on by the prince's brother, Don Tello, appeared 16,000 horse, and in the third, which he reserved for himself, were to be found a multitude of soldiers of various descriptions, sufficient in number to make up the gross amount of 100,000 men. As the example of courage and terror is equally contagious, perhaps it might have been more prudent to mingle with those bodies of troops which were doubtful, or at least untried, those whose resolution was more clearly ascertained. Instead of this, however, the knights who accompanied Du Guesclin, and who had become veteran in the wars of France and England, were all placed in the small division of the gallant Breton; while the second and third divisions, though containing, beyond all doubt, many brave and resolute men, consisted almost entirely of soldiers whose courage had not been hardened against sudden panic by the long habit of war.

Besides the superiority of numbers, the army of Don Henry had the great advantage of obtaining food of all kinds, while the forces of the Prince of Wales passed the night in the same state of utter want which had preceded the day of Poitiers. The English soldiers, however, slept calm amongst the rosemary bushes, which clothe that part of the country; and a little after midnight, the trumpets of both hosts were heard sounding the *revéillez*. The clang of armour, and the cries of the leaders mustering their men under their various banners, then broke upon the stillness of the night; and next succeeded the measured tramp of marching armies, as each force advanced in the gray dawn, towards the spot which was soon to be the scene of deadly strife. At sunrise, the prince and his forces had

reached the summit of a little hill; and the bright rays of the morning, as they poured over the field of Najarra, flashed back on every side from the shining panoply of either army, as the one on the hill, and the other in the plain below, stood with pennons waving, and banners displayed, gazing on the magnificent array of their foes. After contemplating the adverse force for a few minutes in silence, the Black Prince raised his eyes to heaven, exclaiming, "Oh, true Father, thou God that madest me, grant by thy benign grace, that this day be for me and mine; as thou dost know that only to maintain the right, and to restore this dethroned and exiled king I now advance to battle."* He then gave his right hand to Don Pedro, saying, "Sir king, this day you shall know whether you shall ever hold anything in Castille or not. On, banners! On! in the name of God and St. George!"†

The advance-guard, under the Duke of Lancaster and John Lord Chandos, immediately quickened its pace, and charged the division of Du Guesclin, while the body commanded by Edward himself poured down upon the force of Don Tello. Du Guesclin, with the French soldiers, received the English with courage and steadiness; and in that part of the field the contest became fierce and desperate. Don Tello, however, though his division was more than double, in point of numbers, that commanded by the Prince of Wales, gave way at the first attack; and the

* Froissart, chap. DLI. I have given these speeches as nearly as possible in the words of Froissart. Perhaps, as I have before remarked in regard to others, they were never spoken; but it is very probable that they were, or something very similar in their place; and at all events they show what a person intimately acquainted with the habits and manners of the prince conceived he would say and do on such an occasion.

† Shortly before, John Lord Chandos—who, though one of the most distinguished knights in the service, had never conceived himself hitherto powerful enough to display his own banner, which implied a considerable body of followers—had advanced to the prince and Don Pedro with a banner which had not been unfurled, and declaring that he was now sufficiently rich in lands and retainers to take his station as a banneret, demanded Edward's permission to act as such in the approaching battle. The Black Prince instantly displayed the banner with his own hands, and returning it to Chandos, prayed God to protect him under it.

commander set the example of flying from the field, followed at once by 2000 horsemen, who had not struck a stroke that day.* Confusion and terror instantly spread throughout the body of the Spaniards: the prince and his officers, urging vigorously their first success, completely dispersed the second division of the Spanish army; and then leaving the fugitives to pursue their way, at once charged the immense reserve commanded by Don Henry himself.

At the same time, the King of Majorca, seeing no body of the enemy disengaged, poured down to the assistance of the Black Prince, with the troops under his command, which gave Edward, in that part of the field, a force nearly equal in number to one-third of the division of the adverse prince. At first, the Spanish slingers, whose skill in the use of that ancient weapon with which they were armed, is still very remarkable, annoyed the force of the prince as it approached; but no sooner had the archers arrived within bow-shot, than the English arrows changed the face of affairs. The slingers fled in confusion; and the men-at-arms of both sides pushed forward, and closed in deadly conflict.

The manœuvre which had gained for De Montford the battle of Auray was here employed by Don Henry in vain. A large body of light cavalry had been stationed apart to rally the fugitives and to afford their aid wherever it might be needed; but the persevering, unconquerable determination of the prince and his knights still bore back the superior force of the adversary. Peter himself, whose best quality was courage, fought like a common soldier in every part of the field, rushing from rank to rank in search of his illegitimate brother, and daring him to come forth and meet him, hand to hand, in no very measured or very decent terms. Nor was Henry of Transtamare wanting in any of the qualities necessary to a true knight, and a good comman-

* It appears from all accounts that a considerable part of the division of Don Tello maintained a confused resistance; though, broken and weakened as it was by the defection of the large body which followed the fugitive prince, it could effect nothing against the superior discipline and steady array of the forces under the Black Prince.

der. Though fighting constantly in the thickest of the press, where danger was most rife, and death most busy; he never lost sight of the general object in the particular strife which he was forced to wage. Three times in person he rallied his disordered forces, and led them back to the charge; and had victory depended upon individual exertions, his army might have obtained that success which its numbers justified him in expecting.

Two distinct battles were now raging in different parts of the field; for Chandos and John of Gaunt were still deep in a desperate struggle with Du Guesclin. It appears certain, that the French brigade had been reinforced by a body of Spaniards; and it is probable that the division was not inferior in number to the English force immediately opposed to it.* The fight was maintained with determined resolution; and for a long time the victory of the English in that spot was doubtful. At one period, indeed, the day seemed going against the Duke of Lancaster: the ranks of both parties were broken, and a considerable number of men had fallen on either side; but in the midst of the mêlée a body of French and Spaniards poured in upon the banner of John of Chandos. He himself was cast to the ground, a gigantic Castillian threw himself upon the English knight, and strove to slay him as he held him down; but Chandos, never more collected than in the greatest danger, though sword and battle-axe were gone, drew a small dagger from his bosom as he struggled beneath the weight of his foe, and by reiterated strokes upon the armour of his antagonist, at length found an undefended part, and plunged the dagger up to the hilt in his breast. Mortally wounded, the Spaniard relaxed his hold, while Chandos,

* The division of Du Guesclin contained originally, according to the account of Froissart, 4000 knights and squires of France, which would make the real number of fighting men about 12,000. The man-at-arms or gendarme was always noble by birth; and after their regular institution as a standing force in France (which did not take place till the following century) each *lance fournie*, as it was called, implied a man-at-arms, two archers, a page, and two *coutilliers*. See Monteil, Hist. des Franc. de divers Etats, tom. v. p. 398; but at the time of which we now speak, each man-at-arms was, in general, though not always, accompanied by two inferior soldiers.

struggling up from beneath his weight, cast his body to the ground, and hastening to reassure his friends, led them on once more to victory.

His reappearance, when all had thought him dead, gave new hopes and courage to the English. His friends who had pressed forward, either to rescue him, or to avenge his death, still clove their way on in the midst of the French. The main body of the adverse knights were driven back, but a large body, isolated in the midst of the English troops, were forced to surrender. No less than sixty were taken under the banner of Chandos alone; and amongst them were found three men whose capture was decisive of the fortunes of that division. These were the Bégue de Vilaines, the Maréchal d'Audenham, and Bertrand du Guesclin.* No other officers of any great influence and judgment remained on the part of the French after these were made prisoners; and that brigade was completely routed with little difficulty.

The division of the Duke of Lancaster and Lord Chandos was now at liberty to act in any other part of the field; and these commanders seeing the Black Prince and his force engaged with Don Henry on the right, instantly charged the flank of the Spanish army, carrying terror and confusion at once into ranks which were already wavering. The troops of Henry of Transtamare gave way on every side; large bodies began to fly towards the Ebro, and to Najarra; they speedily separated as they fled into small parties, and then, as the sound of pursuit came rapidly upon them, spread, like withered leaves in a storm, over all the country round. The largest body of fugitives was that which took the way to the town, but the English and Gascons followed close upon their steps. A dreadful slaughter took place upon the bridge and in the streets; and a fortified house into which the Grand Prior of St. James and the Grand Master of Calatrava had thrown themselves, was stormed and taken notwithstanding a vigorous resist-

* A variety of absurd fables are to be found in the histories of Du Guesclin in regard to his capture on this occasion. None of them, however, bear the slightest signs of authenticity; and I have therefore contented myself with the statement of Froissart, which, as it is the simplest, is probably the most accurate.

ance. Quarter, however, was not refused where demanded; and a number of prisoners were made in Najara, the palace and houses of which city afforded a rich booty to the pursuers. The rout, however, and the chase, were not alone urged in this direction,—the whole country round the field of battle was covered by the dispersed army of Don Henry. Thousands fell in the flight, thousands were drowned in attempting to swim the river; and the stream of the Ebro flowed literally red with human blood. The English pursued the enemy unwearied; and it was evening before the leaders began once more to assemble round the banner of the Prince of Wales, which had been raised on the summit of a little hill commanding a view of the field of battle. Amongst the last who arrived was Don Pedro himself, heated with pursuit and dripping with gore; and springing from his black charger to the ground, he grasped the hand of the Prince of Wales, thanking him for a victory, which he felt must restore him to his throne.*

"Give thanks and praise to God and not to me," replied the prince; "for from him, not me, you have received the victory."

About 8000 men fell on the field of battle, including English, French, and Spaniards; and amongst these, it would appear that the loss was very equal: but many more perished in the flight and in the river, whose numbers could never be ascertained. For some time it was supposed that Don Henry might be amongst the slain, but it proved afterwards that he had quitted the field with the last of the fugitives; and at once abandoning all hope of maintaining his power after such a signal defeat, he took a different direction from the rest, reached Soria and Calatayud;† and finding that he was unknown, proceeded to the neighbouring castle of Illueca, where he confided his misfortunes and his danger to Don Juan and Don Pedro de Luna. The latter agreed to guide the dethroned prince in disguise through Aragon; in the king of which country, though lately his ally, Don Henry did not dare to trust. His

* Saturday, 3d of April, 1367.
† D. Po. L. de Ayala. Zurita Ann. de Aragon, lib. ix. cap. lxviii. lxix.

journey was performed in safety; and having reached the French territory, the exile took refuge at the papal court of Avignon, a short time before Urban V. quitted that city for Rome.*

In the mean time an extraordinary scene took place at Najarra, on the day succeeding that of the battle. The first request addressed by Don Pedro to the Black Prince, when he met him before his tent the next morning, was, that Edward would give him up all the Castillian prisoners; in order that he might put them to death. The prince, however, whose nature was most abhorrent of such cruelties, demanded and obtained, as a boon to himself, that the lives of all should be spared, except one, for whom, whatever was his crime, the Black Prince did not think fit to intercede;† and his influence over the savage Castillian prince was so great, that he induced him to have the pardon he conferred unembarrassed by any harder conditions, than merely that of swearing fealty once more to their former sovereign. Even his brother Sancho, who had fought at Najarra against him, was received and embraced by Don Pedro, at the request of the Prince of

* It will be seen that the view I have taken of Don Henry's flight is opposed to the account given by Froissart. My reason for adopting such opinions is, that Don F. L. de Ayala, who was also contemporary, was more likely to be well informed of the movements of Don Henry, to whom he and his father were attached, than Froissart. It is also clearly proved by D. Vaissette that Don Henry could not have performed the journey attributed to him by Froissart in the time, much less all the marvels with which the historians of Du Guesclin honour his memory. One part of the account of Ayala, however, is not probable. He states that Henry was conducted by Jacca to Orthez, where he was received and aided on his way by the Count de Foix. In the first place, it is unlikely that Henry should take a direction through the midst of Aquitaine, the territory of the Prince of Wales, his adversary; and equally unlikely that he should apply for protection to one of that adversary's officers who had been left in defence of the country.

† His name was Don Gomez Carrillo; and there is every reason to believe that this treason must have been accompanied by some very notorious circumstances of aggravation, as Froissart declares that the Black Prince pointedly made him an exception, when he demanded the lives of the Castillian prisoners as a boon after the battle of Najarra.

Wales; but the sanguinary disposition of the Spanish king was not satisfied till he had seen with his own eyes the blood of the only prisoner who was given up to his vengeance, shed without the enclosure of the camp.

The city of Burgos immediately threw open her gates to Don Pedro; the rest of the country with scarcely the exception of a single town submitted, and Spain was restored to her ancient rule.

For some time all things passed in tranquillity or rejoicing. Edward, the Black Prince, encamped without the walls of Burgos; and day after day exhibited to the Spaniards some of those great military pageants for which the court of his father was famous. No signs appeared, however, of any intention on the part of Don Pedro to pay the troops which he had engaged to fight his battles, now that the day was won; and Edward at length found it necessary, however unwillingly, to remind the restored monarch of the treaties he had signed. The last design entertained by the treacherous monarch of Spain was to discharge his obligations; but it was of course necessary to conceal for some time his intention of violating them. He accordingly represented to Edward, that at Burgos he could not procure the necessary sums to pay the troops, as he was most desirous to do; but that if the English forces would remove into Leon, and take up their quarters near Valladolid, he would himself proceed to Seville, and as soon as possible would transmit the money which he had bound himself to furnish. This plan was immediately adopted; and while Edward marched his troops to Valladolid, Don Pedro advanced to Seville.

Day after day now passed without any news of the Castillian king, and the Black Prince became impatient to return to Aquitaine. His anxiety, indeed, was not without sufficient cause. Don Henry, after his escape from Spain, had allied himself with the Duke of Anjou; and, though the King of France was compelled, in some degree, to discountenance any hostile acts towards England, yet it was evident that Henry relied upon France for aid and support in proceedings which were entirely contrary to the existing treaties between the English and French crowns.

The exiled prince established his residence at Pierre

Pertuse,* on the frontiers of Aquitaine; and, having gathered together a small body of adventurers, began to make war on the principality. As his force increased, his undertakings became bolder, and casting himself into the midst of Aquitaine, he took Bagneres de Bigorre by storm, fortified himself within the walls, and, notwithstanding all the efforts of Lord James Audley, continued to ravage the country round.†

This evil, however, was small in comparison with that which assailed the Black Prince in the heart of his own camp. Towards midsummer, a pestilential disease broke out in his army, which attacked all ranks and all classes, and not only swept away immense numbers every day, but left those that survived languishing and enfeebled.‡ So much was this the case with Edward himself, that he was generally reported to have been poisoned;§ and it is certain that, though he was restored to health in a degree, his constitution received a shock from which it never wholly recovered. The absolute necessity of seeking another climate now impelled him to send messengers to Don Pedro, demanding the immediate fulfilment of his promises. But the base Castillian was as well aware of the enfeebled state of Edward's army as any one in the camp; and well knowing that the prince, who had seated him on the throne, was no longer in a state to compel the execution of the treaties between them, he replied that the presence of the adventurous companies had so worn out the resources of the kingdom, he could not at once raise the money required; but that if Edward would withdraw his troops, and the companions from Spain, the sums to pay them would be sent after him to Aquitaine.

The Black Prince was in no degree deceived, and at

* Called Roquemore by the French historians, but proved by the historians of Languedoc to be the castle of Pierre Pertuse, in the diocese of Narbonne.

† There can be very little doubt that in his hostilities against Aquitaine Henry of Transtamare was supported by the French king, Charles V., through the medium of his brother, the Duke of Anjou, who of course felt hatred towards the English in proportion as he had disgraced himself by his conduct towards them.

‡ Knighton, col. 2629. § Walsingham, p. 117.

once saw the determination of his perfidious ally to leave him to bear all the expenses of the expedition. We have reason to believe that Edward was too generous in his nature to seek, from motives of personal revenge, to pull down that man, whom he had raised up out of compassion, even if his forces had enabled him to overthrow the throne he had established. Such, however, was not the case. So great had been the mortality in his camp, that a contemporary* distinctly states, scarcely a fifth part of his troops survived; and he himself, suffering under the languor of an illness from which he was never destined to recover, was in no state to commence a war which required unimpaired energy and activity.

He determined then to quit the country and to return to Aquitaine without loss of time; and, striking his tents, he began his march for the frontiers of Aragon.† At Soria, however, he received intelligence that the passes of both Navarre and Aragon would be shut against him by the respective monarchs of those countries; and he was obliged to pause for some weeks, in order to obtain permission to effect a passage peacefully, which he might have found great difficulty in forcing.

With the false and unstable King of Navarre, who, by this time, had once more allied himself to Henry of Transtamare, Edward could prevail no further than to give a passage for himself and a certain number of attendants. The companions, who, in truth, had exercised their habits of plunder in Navarre on their former visit, were now positively prohibited from entering that kingdom.‡ With the King of Aragon, Edward was much more successful; and so great was the influence of the personal character of the Black Prince, that he wrought an entire change in that monarch's sentiments in many respects. Never, perhaps, was the generous beneficence of his nature more strikingly displayed than in the use he made of that influence on the present occasion. By Don Pedro he had been betrayed and ill treated; and he was even then returning in disgust to his own country, loaded with an immense debt which

* Knighton, col. 2629.
† Froissart, chap. dlxii.
‡ Froissart, chap. dlxii.

he had incurred in the service of that ungrateful miscreant, and bowed down with sickness which had fallen upon him while waiting for the execution of his deceitful promises. The opportunity, however, of serving him presented itself while negotiating for his own passage through Aragon, and Edward at once used it with the noblest zeal. He forgot the injuries he had received; and employing his whole influence with the King of Aragon for the benefit of Don Pedro, he detached the Aragonese monarch entirely from the interests of Henry of Transtamare, and brought about an alliance* between the two kings, which would have secured to Don Pedro possession of the throne of Castille, were anything on earth powerful enough to obviate the destiny which the wicked ever works out for himself.

By the treaty which he concluded with the King of Aragon at Tarazona, he obtained permission for his troops to pass freely through that monarch's dominions, but he himself, weakened and anxious, took the shorter road by Navarre, followed by a small train; and, once more treading the pass of Roncesvalles, he left behind the land where he had achieved his last great victory. He was met at Bayonne and Bordeaux with triumph and acclamation, and was received by his fair wife, carrying her young son Edward to welcome his father's return. But though glory and eternal honour remained to follow his mighty name to all posterity, success, and health, and happiness, had quitted the Black Prince for ever, and the remaining part of his history is but the detail of a tedious death.

* Ferreras, pp. 391, 396. The materials for writing the history of the expedition to Spain are ample, Zurita, Ferreras, Ayala, and others, furnishing the Spanish accounts; and Froissart, who was at Bordeaux at the time, giving the contemporary view of all these events as taken by the English. These, however, are all chroniclers; and the state papers by which their statements might be corrected are few. They are to be found in Rymer, vol. iii. part ii. pp. 800, 802, 804, 810, 821, 823, 824, 825. Ed. 1830.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DU GUESCLIN RANSOMED.—DIFFICULTIES OF THE BLACK PRINCE.—PARLIAMENT OF NIORT.—THE TAX CALLED FOUAGE PROPOSED.—THE BARONS OF HIGHER GASCONY REVOLT AND FLY TO PARIS.—INSIDIOUS PROCEEDINGS OF THE FRENCH KING.—TREATS WITH ALL THE ENEMIES OF ENGLAND.—DON HENRY RETURNS TO SPAIN.—DEATH OF PEDRO.—CHARLES V. SUMMONS THE BLACK PRINCE TO APPEAR BEFORE HIM AS A VASSAL.—HIS REPLY.—PREPARATIONS FOR WAR.—CHARLES TEMPORISES WITH EDWARD.—EXCITES TREASON IN PONTHIEU.—DECLARES WAR.

ALMOST all the French prisoners who had been taken at the battle of Najarra had been permitted to ransom themselves before the return of the prince; but Bertrand du Guesclin, as the chief support of Henry of Transtamare, had been detained in order to give time for Don Pedro to establish himself firmly on the throne, ere any attempt could be made to overthrow his power. The historians of Britanny represent the state of imprisonment to which he was subjected as very severe; and relate many anecdotes of his life at Bordeaux, the greater part of which are proved to be false, and the rest are almost universally contradicted by Froissart; whose presence in that city at the time, and whose uniform candour, where he had an opportunity of judging, render his testimony the best that can be produced.

By his account* Du Guesclin seems to have been almost as much at liberty in Bordeaux as any of the members of the Black Prince's court; and he states, that Edward one day, while he was in higher spirits than usual, seeing Du Guesclin standing near, called him to approach, and asked after his health.

"I never yet was better, my lord," replied the Breton; "and well I ought to be; for though I remain your prisoner, I feel myself the most honoured knight in all the world, and I will tell you why. They say," he added, "in

* Froissart, chap. DLXIII.

France, and other countries, too, that you are afraid of me, and dare not set me free."

"Ha, Sir Bertrand!" replied the prince. "Do you think, then, for your renown, I keep you in prison? No! by St. George! Pay a ransom of 100,000 francs," he continued, laughing, "and you are free."

The prince, it would appear, had named so high a sum in jest, but Du Guesclin took him at his word; and though Edward himself repented having promised liberation to a man who, he well knew, would instantly endeavour to undo all that had been done in Spain, and though his council strongly advised him to break his promise with Du Guesclin, and not to set him free on any conditions, at least till Don Pedro had paid the sums he owed, Edward would not swerve in the least from the words he had spoken; and he immediately allowed the bold Breton to depart, in order to seek his ransom in his own country.*

Though Bertrand Du Guesclin, himself, is stated to have been poor,† his worth was sufficiently appreciated in France, and his liberty sufficiently necessary to the views of the French king to render the means of obtaining his ultimate liberation very easy. A part of the sum was instantly raised in Britanny, and the rest was advanced by Charles V. in December, 1367.‡ Before the close of the year, it would appear that the whole was paid; and after accompanying the Duke of Anjou to the siege of Tarascon,

* I have followed throughout the account of Froissart; because, from being on the spot, from his intimacy with the Black Prince and with the princess, he had better means of knowing the truth than any other writer whose works have descended to the present day. No one, I believe, has ever accused Froissart of falsifying the truth when he knew it, and, therefore, when he had as good an opportunity of learning the facts as other writers he may always be relied upon. In the present instance he had better opportunities, and is certainly more likely to have known the truth than Ayala, on whose account all the others are founded.

† It is not possible to conceive that Du Guesclin could be in such a state of poverty as is generally stated to have been the case at this time. He possessed, long before this period, the rich county of Longueville, as we find, both in the deed cited below, from Du Tillet, and in a deed of Don Henry, preserved by Lobinau in the proofs of the History of Bretagne, 12th book.

‡ Du Tillet, Rec. p. 289.

and conducting some unimportant operations in Provence, Du Guesclin prepared to draw his sword once more in favour of Henry of Transtamare, and to seat him on the throne of Castille.

In the mean time, difficulties and discomforts increased around the Prince of Wales, in consequence of the ill conduct of Don Pedro. The immense sums for which he had become bound were every day more imperatively demanded by the troops he had led into Castille; and neither his own private revenues, nor the revenues of the principality, afforded any possibility of discharging the large debt which had been thus contracted. At the same time, the degree of state which he kept up and the splendour which he displayed in his government of Aquitaine—a degree of state and splendour even* beyond what was common and customary in that age†—drained his treasury, and left him

* Froissart, chap. DLXV.

† I have already remarked that the great failing of Edward the Black Prince was a want of proper economy; and although the treacherous avarice of Don Pedro was the proximate cause of the prince's present necessity, there can be no doubt, that had Edward not been lavish and extravagant, he would have had means to meet the necessity when it occurred. The large revenues which he derived from Wales, the still larger which he received from Aquitaine, the duchy of Cornwall, and the vast property of his wife, must have supplied enough for splendour and for generosity, and yet have left something to accumulate for the hour of need; but those were days in which there was many a temptation to extravagance, and many an example, and Edward knew not the meaning of economy.—A striking instance of the lavish profusion and extravagance of the princes of that day is afforded by the marriage festival of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, third son of Edward III., with Violanta, daughter of the Lord of Milan, which took place at this very time. The young duke passed over through France and Savoy to Milan in order to seek his bride, and on the marriage-day a banquet was given, at which the famous Petrarch sat amongst the royal guests, when thirty courses were served up, and between each course the attendants brought a quantity of presents to Prince Lionel and his knights of the most costly description. Some of these presents, indeed, were of a kind which we cannot very easily conceive at a banquet table, or in a hall, however spacious. Thus we find, that at one time were presented seventy chargers, completely caparisoned; and at another, vessels of gold and silver, pairs of falcons, complete suits of armour for man and horse, were brought in and offered to the bridegroom. The Duke of Clarence died soon after his marriage; and so

without any resource except that of diminishing his own expenses, and imposing some new tax upon his vassals.

Before either of these means could be employed with effect, the free companions, demanding their arrears, and totally unoccupied, began to exercise their wonted propensity to plunder upon Aquitaine itself; and Edward, to disembarrass himself from the presence of such troublesome neighbours, was obliged to connive at their once more entering the territories of the King of France.* Early in the succeeding year, 1368, another event occurred, which, though seemingly of little import, was followed by the most serious consequences. This was the marriage of Armand, Lord of Albret, who had not yet forgiven the curtailment of his military force by the Prince of Wales, with Marguerite de Bourbon, sister of the Queen of France—a marriage which completed the alienation of a refractory subject from Aquitaine, and secured to the proud and stubborn barons of Gascony a certain refuge and a vigorous support. Those barons soon found a fair excuse for casting off the authority of a country to which they had long submitted unwillingly.

The necessities of the Black Prince compelled him to call a general meeting of the states of Aquitaine, and he laid before them a project for paying off the immense debt he had contracted in the re-establishment of Don Pedro, by means of a tax of one livre upon every fire, commonly known by the name of *le fouage*—an impost which was by no means new in other parts of France, and which had

strongly was it suspected that he had been poisoned, that his friend and companion in arms, Lord Edward Spencer, joined himself to Sir Thomas Hackwood, and what was called the White Company of Free Companions, and for many months waged a devastating warfare against the Duke of Milan, in revenge for the prince's death.

* Froissart declares positively that Edward ordered them to quit his territory and go elsewhere; but I find in Rymer a strong proclamation from Edward III. commanding their leaders to abstain from aggressions on the French territory and to return to peaceful occupations. The proclamation, which was, as may be supposed, totally ineffectual, is dated 16th November, 1367. Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 141. The statement, therefore, of the Chronique de France, which places their return to France in 1368, must be incorrect.

been levied in various districts now comprised in Aquitaine, several times since the commencement of the fourteenth century.

The propriety of again attempting it in the principality had been strongly urged upon the prince by the Bishop of Bath,* and the universal consent of all the lower provinces of Aquitaine seemed to justify his advice. The lords of the higher marches, as they were called, were the only persons who demurred; and at their head appeared the Lord of Albret, who seems to have resolved, from the commencement, to hurry forward his companions into revolt. All that could be obtained from them at the first meeting of the states was a promise to deliberate upon the demand and return an answer by a certain day. They then retired to their several territories; and after a short consultation in regard to the best means of opposing the prince, the Lord of Albret† set the bold example of proceeding to the court of France,‡ and appealing to Charles V. as sovereign lord of the whole country.§

* The ordinary editions of Froissart attribute this proposal, and the office of chancellor also, to the Bishop of Rodez, and they have been followed by most of the English historians, though Rymer was beneath their eyes. It will be found by all the Gascon rolls, that the Chancellor of Aquitaine was at that time the Bishop of Bath; with which all the best manuscripts of Froissart agree.

† Froissart does not place D'Albret first; but the statement of Christine de Pisan infers that he led the way in the revolt.

‡ Christine de Pisan, chap. vii. part ii.

§ Whether Edward did or did not do anything to justify this rebellious conduct may perhaps be doubted. His proceeding, in the first instance, was according to the usual legal form in which all imposts were levied. He applied to the states, and proposed the tax he thought best calculated to meet the exigencies of the moment. If the states did not approve of that impost, it was for them to refuse it, but certainly not to fly to the court of another sovereign, unless some intimidation was used, or some tyrannous means attempted. If we are to believe the statement of Froissart, no such thing was done. The conduct of the prince he represents as gentle and considerate; allowing the barons of Gascony to retire to their own territories in order to deliberate, upon their promise to reassemble again at Niort, and return an answer to his demand—a promise which they did not keep. The fouage, or tax upon the fires, also, he did not propose as a perpetual impost, but merely as a grant for five years, or till the debts he had incurred in the reestablishment of Don Pedro should be discharged; and so far from

As no one knew better than the Gascon lords that Charles, in his own person, as well as France under the sway of his father, had solemnly renounced all sovereignty and claim upon Aquitaine whatever, we cannot suppose that they would have taken the irretrievable step upon which they now determined, unless they had been well assured beforehand that the French monarch was willing and prepared to break his oath, and violate the most essential parts of the engagement he had entered into, now that that engagement was no longer necessary to his own security. The seduction of the Gascon lords from their obedience to the English crown is imputed to him by his best historian* as a point of wisdom; and there can be no doubt that he had already determined upon the plan, which he afterwards successfully pursued, for wresting the provinces he had joined in ceding to England from the hands of the dying Prince of Wales. If the oaths of princes should be sacred, if the noble maxim of his father be true, Charles V. of France merited another title than that of the Wise; and unhappily he does not seem to have found any one in his dominions to remind him that the estates of France had sanctioned the treaty of Bretigny as well as his father and himself.

He afterwards, when he thought fit publicly to violate the engagements under which that treaty laid him, published a defence of his conduct, drawn up by some weak sophist, who endeavoured to blot out the perjury of his master, by a torrent of falsehoods of his own; but the only straightforward statement of his case, the only real palliation of his conduct, is given by a follower of his court, Christine de Pisan, who at once lays it to the score of that murderer of integrity, expediency. She admits at once that the territories held by the King of England owed no homage, acknowledged no submission to the French sovereign; and she adds,† "Charles informed, justly, that engagements and pro-

this sort of tax being an innovation, as almost all historians have supposed, it had been paid an hundred times to the kings of France by the very persons who now resisted it. See D. Vaissette, vol. iv. passim.

* Christine de Pisan, chap. vii. part ii.

† Christine de Pisan, chap. viii. part ii.

mises made to the public prejudice, even by constraint, ought not to hold good, assembled his council, where these things were well examined and discussed, and at last it was concluded that the king had just and sufficient cause to recommence the war."*

In the mean time, however, he affected the most pacific intentions towards the English crown, and professed that his sole design in retaining the revolted barons at his court was to mediate between them and their sovereigns.† Day after day he caused the treaties of Bretigny and Calais with all their dependent documents to be examined, though in vain, to find a pretext for violating his engagements publicly, but at the same time he violated them privately in the most insidious manner. Within three weeks of the first application of the Gascon lords to his court, he sent messengers‡ to treat with Henry of Transtamare for a

* Had Charles boldly declared war against Edward on account of the ravages of the free companies,—had he boldly made common cause with Henry of Transtamare,—had he firmly and boldly expressed his interest in the former subjects of his crown, and mediated between the prince and the nobles of Aquitaine,—he might have still merited the title of the Wise; but virtue is the height of wisdom, and who can doubt that truth is one of the first attributes of virtue?

† Froissart, chap. DLXV. The French writers attempt to prove that Charles was unwilling to break the peace of Bretigny, and that he took all means to satisfy his conscience that he was justified in espousing the cause of the barons of Gascony before he did so. He delayed, indeed, for some months; but that the time was spent in the baser but less apparent sort of warfare, of intrigue and corruption, is not less evident from the affairs of Ponthieu, than from the treaty with Henry of Transtamare. On the 30th of June, 1368, is dated the first application of the Gascon barons to his court; and on the 19th of July are dated the full powers of Charles to conclude an alliance with Castille against the King of England. This treaty, which has never yet been noticed that I know of, may be found in Rymer, tom. iii. part ii p. 148; and it will be seen on consulting it, that not only a war with England was determined, but the precise time specified, and the method of dividing the spoil and apportioning the territories captured from the princes, to whom Charles professed himself as friendly as ever, was clearly and definitely arranged. It is to be remarked, also, that this is a new treaty, totally distinct from that entered into in the year before between Henry and the Duke of Anjou.

‡ Du Tillet, Rec. p. 291. Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. pp. 148, 149, 150.

general alliance against the King of England; and the convention remains as one of the basest instances of royal perfidy in the annals of a world. His preparations for immediate war were not yet complete; and it became necessary to establish Henry of Transtamare on the throne of Castille, and thus to secure a strong ally in the peninsula, as a preliminary step to the renewal of hostilities against England. Du Guesclin, therefore, who had been aiding the false and ambitious Duke of Anjou in his petty warfares in Provence, was ordered to collect once more the free companies in Languedoc, and lead them to the support of the aspirant to the Castillian throne. While these events had been taking place in France, Henry had effected great things in his own favour. No sooner had the Prince of Wales returned to Aquitaine than he evacuated the castle of Bagneres; collected what troops he could upon the frontiers of Roussillon; and, notwithstanding the opposition of the King of Aragon, passed through that monarch's dominions into Old Castille.

His party was still powerful; and his forces increased so rapidly, as he advanced upon Burgos, that he was enabled to make himself master of the place,* capturing therein the King of Majorca, who, on account of sickness, had remained behind when the army of the Prince of Wales had quitted Spain. The whole of old Castille, and the greatest part of Galicia and Leon, now at once acknowledged the authority of Don Henry; and while Du Guesclin raised fresh troops for his service in France, he himself marched on and laid siege to Toledo. His brother Pedro, informed of the immense progress he was making, levied with all speed a considerable army, consisting chiefly of Moors from Grenada, and marched upon Toledo, in order to raise the siege before Du Guesclin could join the forces of his adversary. He was too late, however; the Breton chief had passed the mountains in the early part of the year 1369, and had effected his junction with Don Henry without opposition. By the counsel of Du Guesclin, Henry advanced to meet the army of his brother; and having encountered and defeated him at Monteil, on the 14th of

* Ferreras, p. 396.

March, 1369, he captured Don Pedro, in an endeavour which that unhappy prince made to escape from a castle in which he had taken refuge, and stabbed him in a brutal struggle with his own hand.* Such was the termination of the war in Spain, as far as it is connected with this history.†

A great number of events had taken place in France, during the end of 1368 and the beginning of 1369, which all tended to hasten the breach of the treaty of Bretigny. The first and most serious of these was the increasing illness of the Black Prince, which rendered him incapable

* Froissart declares that the death of Peter took place in the tent of the Bégue de Vilaine; but the greater part of the Spanish chroniclers say that it was in the tent of Du Guesclin, and cast the odium of his death upon that great general. Cruelty, however, was no part of Du Guesclin's character.

† In regard to the date of the battle of Monteil, three opinions have prevailed; the first is founded upon the authority of Froissart alone, and would place the engagement on the 13th August, 1368; the second is raised upon the assertions of the Spanish historians, and the Chronique de France, and assigns it the date of the 12th or 14th March, 1369; the third, and newest of the three, is that put forth by the authors of that useful work L'Art de vérifier les Dates, on the faith of a concession made by Henry to Du Guesclin, from which, in counting by the Spanish era, which was the common method of dating used by Henry, it would appear that the battle took place in March, 1368. Against this opinion, Monsieur Buchon has brought forward many strong arguments, proving from other documents that Du Guesclin could not have been in Spain at any time previous to October, 1368, and, therefore, both the account of Froissart and that of L'Art de vérifier les Dates must be erroneous. This is farther established by a paper which, however important, has hitherto passed without any notice, but which may serve to justify the views of M. Buchon most completely, namely, the treaty between Henry of Transtamare and Charles V. of France, which is dated from the camp besieging Toledo, 20th November, 1368; which siege having preceded the battle, it is clear that the defeat and death of Pedro could not take place either in August or March of the same year. In regard to the paper cited by the authors of the Art of verifying Dates, it is to be remarked, that their copy differs from another in regard to the year. In the treaty preserved by Rymer (tom. iii. part ii. p. 150), the date being in words and not in figures does not admit of a doubt. It is also stated in the body of the paper that the date is according to the Roman (not the Spanish) computation. There is every reason to believe, therefore, that the account of Ferreras and of the Chronicles of France is correct, and that the battle took place in March, 1369.

of very active superintendence of the affairs of the principality, facilitated all the intrigues which the French monarch carried on in the heart of the English territories by the aid of the clergy, and strengthened the Gascon lords in their revolt by comparative impunity. The fouage, or tax on every fire, was nevertheless pressed with all the eager impetuosity of keen necessity, notwithstanding the remonstrances of several of the prince's most worthy counsellors. Chandos himself, finding the opposition he had uniformly offered to the obnoxious tax perfectly fruitless, obtained permission to retire to his territory of St. Sauveur le Viscomte in Normandy, and waited the event in painful anticipation.

Charles V., in the mean while, unembarrassed by any principle except that of expediency, proceeded to the accomplishment of his design with the most cautious, careful, and politic steps, strengthening the many ties which still existed between the towns and provinces that had been ceded to England, and the country of which they had so lately formed a part by every kind of intrigue. At length his preparations were so far completed, that he judged it prudent to afford confidence and encouragement to his friends, by taking some step of a character sufficiently decided to evince a determination of carrying to extremity, should it be necessary, the views he had privately developed to them. Actuated by the same careful prudence, however, which guarded all his proceedings, he, in the first place, entered into a convention with the revolted barons of Aquitaine, by which he bound them never to make peace with England without his consent, if he undertook the war to which they urged him.* He then, in the beginning of February, 1369, directed the Seneschal of Toulouse to summon the Prince of Aquitaine, as a vassal, before the court of peers of France, to answer the charges of the Gascon lords.†

As we have before shown, the summons, after a treaty such as that of Bretigny, which rendered Aquitaine totally

* This treaty is to be found in a manuscript of the Bibliothèque du Roi at Paris, No. 8343, first published by Monsieur Buchon.

† Hist. de Languedoc, p. 338.

independent of France, was but an insulting mockery or a hypocritical pretext, and the choice of messengers for so delicate an embassy was somewhat difficult. At length the seneschal selected two, on whose courage and prudence he could equally rely, named Bernard Palot, criminal judge of Toulouse, and Sir John of Chapouval, an old and experienced knight of Beauce.* These two commissioners proceeded immediately to Bordeaux, neglecting, however, to furnish themselves with the necessary passports. They were at once admitted into the presence of the prince, whose illness, though it had greatly enfeebled those corporeal powers for which he had once been famous, did not prevent him from transacting the usual business of the office that he held. The unannounced appearance of the French envoys somewhat surprised him, and the preparatory language with which they opened the purport of their mission did not tend to lessen his astonishment; but when they proceeded to read a formal summons from the King of France, addressed to him who, by the treaty of Bretigny, owed no obedience, homage, or allegiance to the French crown, every other feeling was swallowed up in indignation.

He heard the paper to an end, however, and then replied, with the burning wrath of his heart flashing from his eyes, —"Yes! we will go willingly to the rendezvous in Paris, since the King of France calls us thither; but it shall be with helmet on head, and lance in the rest, and 60,000 men to bear us company."† The envoys, after having acquitted themselves of the commission with which they were charged, retired from the presence of the prince, and made all speed towards the frontiers; but it having been ascertained that they bore no safe-conduct, they were arrested before they had accomplished their retreat.‡

* Froissart, chap. dlxxv.

† In General Ainslie's excellent book, on the Anglo-French coinage, are to be found several representations of the black or fouage money, and pieces coined about the period of the French king's summons to the Black Prince, in which Edward is represented pointing to his drawn sword; which attitude the learned author conceives (I believe correctly) to have been chosen in reference to his famous reply to the French envoys.

‡ Froissart, chap. dlxxvii. The persons commissioned to arrest

Preparations for war now began to be made on both sides; and messengers from the Prince of Wales announced to the free companies, who were at this time ravaging the banks of the Loire, that their aid would be required early in the year, as Edward of Aquitaine was resolved to keep his appointment with the King of France, and to appear at the approaching fair of the Landit, in the plain of St. Denis, towards the middle of June, with such an army as would soon decide his cause in the chamber of the French peers. But a mightier arm was opposed to him than any that could be raised against his progress in France; and He who cuts short so many splendid schemes and well laid projects had already stretched his hand. A mortal sickness lay heavy on the heroic prince; and, though the icy touch of death itself could not yet freeze the generous blood in his heart, the effects of slow and wasting sickness chilled all his bodily powers, and made the deed fall short of the intention.

To his father Edward instantly communicated the insulting message he had received from the King of France; and the English monarch, at once seeing that war was inevitable, took measures to carry it on with vigour, as soon as the hard necessity should be forced upon him.* He does not appear to have known, however, the state of forwardness to which the preparations of the French king had been brought, nor to have estimated in any degree the subtilty

them, it appears from Froissart, either from private instructions to that effect, or from personal motives of precaution, did not make use of the name of the prince, but had recourse to a fictitious and disgraceful charge against the French envoys, of having purloined a horse at their last resting place.

* Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. pp 155, 156, 157. Many of the English historians have supposed and asserted that Edward III. did not place full confidence in the warning of the Prince of Wales, and believed that he was prompted by youthful impatience and a warlike spirit; but it is clear from the papers cited above that the king instantly began his preparations for war; and if he did not carry them on with his former vigour, which probably proceeded from the increasing inactivity of age, he never entirely ceased them, for we find multiplied commissions of array, and military orders of various kinds, from the 20th of March, about which time the prince's letters must have reached him, till the 3d of June, when he reassumed the title of King of France.

and art of that insincere prince; and he suffered himself to be deceived into comparative inactivity by negotiations which were intended solely to occupy his mind and distract his attention from the views and intrigues of the French court.

Charles had many motives for delaying the general war which he had determined upon, at all events till late in the year 1369. In the first place, the increasing illness of the Black Prince, every symptom of which, to use the expressive words of Froissart, *he had by heart*, gave him good hope of soon being delivered from that unconquered foe, who had so often scattered the hosts of France like dust before the hurricane. The malady which Edward had contracted in Spain had now proceeded to such a length that he was no longer able to mount his horse. His strength and appetite were gone, his limbs were weak and swollen, and the physicians of France assured their sovereign that the mighty enemy of their country was soon destined to lay his head beneath the tomb.*

Besides this consideration, the French monarch remembered that Du Guesclin, on whom his eyes were already fixed with that unerring insight into human character which he possessed more than any monarch that ever reigned, was still in Spain, with a large body of the best officers that France could bring into the field. Secret negotiations were, also, in progress with the people of Ponthieu, and many other parts of the territory which had been ceded to England, which negotiations would be rendered fruitless by an untimely breach with the country, in whose possession the alienated provinces actually were.

The space of time which had elapsed since the treaty of Bretigny was far too short for one tie to be broken between France and the lands which had been wrung from her, and the whole affections of the people were still strong towards their native sovereign. Means of security, however, had, of course, been taken in the ceded provinces by the English monarch; and the difficult task undertaken by Charles V. was to conceal his intrigues and his preparation for war from Edward III., while at the same time he insured

* Froissart, chap. DLXXIX.

amongst the people of Ponthieu unity of feeling and design, and afforded them encouragement and assurance of support, by his conduct towards the Gascon lords.

Such were some of the motives which induced him to hold Edward III. in protracted negotiations,* while he suffered the Gascons to begin the war in their own territories,† and stationed the Duke of Anjou with a large force on the frontiers of Aquitaine, in order to support them if absolute necessity should require such a measure. Various pitiful means were resorted to by the French monarch to persuade Edward that his intentions were friendly; and his two ambassadors, whose mission, as is now generally acknowledged, was solely to amuse the English king, were charged to offer a present of fifty pipes of choice wine, which were, however, rejected by Edward, and sent back to France in the charge of the officer who brought them. This occurrence happened on the 26th of April; and before that period, hostilities, evidently countenanced and supported by the French monarch, had already begun on the part of the Gascon barons; while, at the same time, the insidious system of warfare which he had been carrying on in the county of Ponthieu was ready to give place to more open aggression.

The ambassadors retired from the English court to render afterwards a pompous account of their embassy to the States General and the king:‡ and while they were still at Dover a scullion of the French sovereign passed, bearing a declaration of war to the court at Westminster. The choice of such a messenger was, beyond doubt, an insult to the English monarch; but the preparations of Charles were now sufficiently complete to render such insult a part of his policy, the general scope of which, at this period, seems to have been, to cover his own breach of faith by irritating his adversary. It is more than pro-

* Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 155.

† Froissart, chap. DLXXIX.

‡ Chron. de France, cap. xix. These ambassadors were the Count de Saarbruch and the Lord of Dormans; and though their letters of safe-conduct have not been preserved, it is probable that they were dismissed by Edward at the same time that he sent back the presents of the King of France.

bable that his precise purpose was to drive Edward to some act of violence, by which the gross perfidy he meditated in regard to Ponthieu might be justified. But he was deceived; for however irritated Edward might be by the affront he received, his first care was, with the most active foresight, to take every measure for protecting the French hostages from the sudden effects of popular indignation. Thus, while the troops of France, under the command of Hugh de Chatillon,* were marching to take possession of Abbeville, which was betrayed into their hands on the 29th of April, Edward, with generous care, was publishing proclamation after proclamation forbidding in the strictest terms the slightest insult or injury to the hostages that still remained in England,† though many had contrived to effect their escape, in direct violation of their oaths.

At the same time, the English monarch took active measures for the resumption of the war, and his first efforts were full of the energy of his best days; but before anything could be effected in England, to afford powerful assistance to the British troops on the continent, St. Valery, Crotoy, and Pont St. Remy, had fallen; and in ten days the whole of Ponthieu was reannexed to the territories of France.

* Froissart, chap. DLXXXI. Chron. de France, cap. xviii.
† Rymer, tom. iii. par. ii. pp. 155, 156.

CHAPTER XIX.

EDWARD III PREPARES FOR WAR.—NEGOTIATIONS WITH FOREIGN STATES.—INTERNAL MEASURES.—SUPPLIES GRANTED.—THE WAR BEGUN IN AQUITAINE.—MEASURES OF THE BLACK PRINCE.—MERCENARIES HIRED ON BOTH SIDES.—ADVANTAGES GAINED BY CHARLES V. THROUGH THE INTRIGUES OF THE CLERGY OF AQUITAINE.—THE EARLS OF CAMBRIDGE AND PEMBROKE LEAD A FORCE THROUGH BRITANNY TO AID THE PRINCE.—ADVANTAGES GAINED BY THE FRENCH.—GREATER ADVANTAGES OBTAINED BY THE ENGLISH.

The preparations of Edward III. were, as I have before said, anything but complete at the time of the resumption of hostilities on the part of France, however clearly the approaching war might have announced itself beforehand. Though his life had fallen by this time into the sear, that great monarch nevertheless roused himself into activity, at the new call to arms, with energy which might again have won success had not external circumstances been more unfavourable to his designs than was the weight of years which oppressed his after endeavours, and cut short his projects in their course. His efforts as usual divided themselves into two heads—to collect and direct the internal resources of his own kingdom for the purpose of defending himself and assailing his adversary, and to excite foreign allies either to reinforce his armies or to divide the force of his enemy.

The latter endeavours I shall notice here by themselves, as his general military preparations must be spoken of with their effects. His first and most important negotiation was that which took place with Scotland, for the purpose of securing his English territories from attack upon their northern frontier, while his armies were engaged in carrying on the war with France. Of the minor particulars of this this transaction it is not necessary to say anything; but the result was a truce of fourteen years,* which, however ill

* Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 162.

it was ultimately observed, lasted uninterrupted beyond the active life of Edward the Black Prince.*

With the Flemings Edward was successful in the same degree, but not more so, though he strove for active aid rather than passive neutrality. The situation, however, of Flanders was peculiar. The count, by inclination and education attached to France, had so far yielded to the views and interests of his subjects as to consent that his daughter should give her hand to one of the sons of the English king; but as the French interest predominated in the papal court,† the necessary dispensations had been constantly refused, and the heiress of Flanders had remained unmarried. The prospect of an alliance with England became more obscure each day; and at length, having obtained a renunciation of all claims on the part of Edward, the count bestowed his daughter on the young Duke of Burgundy,‡ so that the predilections of the prince for France were greatly increased, while the interests of the people remained unaltered, and led them potently towards England. These conflicting inclinations would probably have neutralized the power of Flanders, even had the count and his subjects, as hitherto, espoused different sides in the quarrel which divided Europe; but all parties in that country were wise enough to see that, when any one order in the state separates from another, the detriment to the whole is generally far greater than the benefit can possibly be to either, and that a slight sacrifice on both parts may procure perfect security and infinite advantage to all. The Flemings gave up their desire of affording active aid to the King of England, and the count abandoned for the time the purpose of supporting the family of his son-in-law. After long conferences and intricate negotiations, a treaty of peace

* Several Scottish nobles, amongst whom we find the Lord of Ross, eager to acquire military renown, took service with the English monarch; but no sooner were the eyes of David Bruce closed in death than Robert Stewart, who succeeded, concluded boldly (October, 1371,) a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, with the crown of France, by which he covenanted to prevent his subjects from aiding the King of England in his wars.—Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 186.

† Froissart, chap. ccclxxxviii.

‡ 19th June, 1369.

and commerce was concluded between Edward and the manufacturing towns;* and the Count of Flanders ratified fully a document which insured considerable privileges to his people.

The Duke of Gueldres and the Marquis of Juliers† were induced by various causes to take a more active part in favour of the King of England, though the insignificance of their territories of course greatly circumscribed their power of serving him; and at the same time Albert of Bavaria and the Duchess of Brabant, though many motives combined to league them on the side of England, agreed to remain neuter, in consequence,‡ it would appear, of long and subtile intrigues which the King of France had been carrying on amongst the most influential of their subjects. A number of the German lords, however, were easily induced to take arms in favour of the English king, and at the same time Edward endeavoured, by every means in his power, to prevent the Italian states from furnishing those mercenary troops, both military and naval, which for many years they had been accustomed to raise for the service of the monarchs of France.§ Extending his negotiations still farther, Edward III. instantly opened a treaty with the King of Navarre, which at first promised fair to secure for England an ally in the heart of France, which treaty, could that ally have been depended on, would have fully counterbalanced the advantage possessed by Charles V. in his connection with the revolted barons of Aquitaine. The Navarrese prince, however, gave ear to the proposals of the English king, solely for the purpose of obtaining his own ends in France; and with a heart destitute of every

* Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. pp. 158, 172, 182.

† Froissart, chap. dlxxxvii.

‡ Froissart says, "Le Roi Charles de France, qui étoit sage et subtil, avoit charpenté et œuvré tous ces traités trois ans en devant." I might, perhaps, have been induced to doubt the statement of the chronicler had not this long, quiet, thoughtful, comprehensive system of preparation for obtaining easily, by the breach of this most solemn engagement, the greatest possible benefit for his people been one, not only of the most curious, and interesting, but also of the best established traits in the character of Charles V.

§ Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. pp. 169, 176, 189.

noble and generous feeling, and a mind so debased as to commit the gross mistake of casting off even the semblance of chivalrous feelings in an age of chivalry, he set himself up openly to the highest bidder as a thing to be bought and sold. Long did he balance between the offers of the two contending princes; and even visited England in the course of 1370, in order to treat with Edward in person; but his demands continually augmenting in proportion to the necessity of the English monarch, he at length suffered his ambition to overreach its mark.* Edward, indeed, seems to have been willing to have granted all that he required; but as considerable alienations of territory were involved, it became necessary that the ratification of the heir apparent of the English throne should also be obtained; and this was positively refused by the Black Prince.†

Such were some of the principal negotiations carried on by Edward with foreign nations; nor were his exertions less energetic in order to call forth, and direct the resources of his own dominions. It would be in vain to notice all the commissions of array that issued, all the feudal summonses that were sent forth, or all the means that were employed to raise money, as well as men, in order to meet the exigencies of the state. Suffice it that the government had recourse to every measure, both legal and illegal, which we have seen employed in the commencement of the reign, and that many additional steps were taken to secure the territories which Edward still possessed, both insular and continental, and to recover that portion of the latter which had been wrested from him. Thus, for the defence of England, a great portion of the coast‡ most liable to invasion received additional protection, by the erection of walls and fortifications: every castle and fortress throughout the land, especially towards the sea, were provided with ammunition and stores. Fleets were hastily prepared, not only to convey the English forces to the continent, but to guard the narrow seas; and, in the maritime counties, every man

* Secoussé, Mém. de Charles, vol. i. part ii. p. 122.
† Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 178.
‡ Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 150.

capable of bearing arms, not even excepting the general clergy, were called forth for the defence of the land.*

The greater part of these measures were sanctioned by a parliament held at Westminster in the middle of the year 1369; and a ready supply of money to a very liberal extent was granted to the king for the purpose of carrying on the war.† The alien priories were also taken into the monarch's own hands,‡ and all the usual customs and resources were left fully at his disposal. With the consent of all the orders of the state, Edward now resumed that unjust title of King of France, which had already required so much blood and treasure to maintain, and he proudly threatened to ride once more triumphant through the fields of France, forgetting that more than twenty decaying years had passed over him and his since he had stood upon the plain of Cressy.

In the mean time, the warfare had commenced in Aquitaine; and though at first it was confined to the efforts of the revolted barons of that principality, the French troops who surrounded the scene of action were not long ere they took part. The first success of the insurgent leaders was the defeat of the English seneschal of Rouergue, who with sixty lances fell into an ambush laid by the Count of Perrigord, with 300 men-at-arms, and with difficulty escaped from the field, leaving the greater part of his companions dead or prisoners. No very great achievements followed on either side for some time; but each party busied itself in preparing means and seeking advantages rather by intrigue and negotiation than by arms.

In order to repel the attacks of the French, Edward the Black Prince despatched messengers to his friends and ancient companions in arms, beseeching them to hasten to his aid; nor was his appeal in vain. Chandos instantly returned from Normandy; Calverly at once began his march with his free company from the frontiers of Aragon; and Guichard d'Angle, who had been despatched on an embassy to Rome, finding that a passage through France would be denied him in his own character, unless he be-

* Id. ibid. p. 161. † Barnes, p. 741.

‡ Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 160.

trayed the prince he served, left his suite under the guidance of his son-in-law, and, in the disguise of a poor friar, made his way back to Aquitaine. The forces in the principality, however, were still barely sufficient to guard the territory itself, and certainly not numerous enough to justify any hostile operations against France; but Edward, whose indignation was excited to the highest possible pitch by the conduct of the French king, treated eagerly with the great companies, in order to raise an army equal to bolder undertakings. Charles V. had already preceded him in the same course, and long before the public declaration of war had privately engaged a number of the companions in his service.* But many other companies had either refused his offers or had been neglected; and as soon as the war really commenced, an eager competition took place to purchase the assistance of bodies of men whom both parties had stigmatized with every opprobrious name during the time of peace. As the principal leaders of the adventurers were in general Englishmen, the prince, whose service they loved, and in whose renown each felt a degree of pride, was in general more successful with them than the King of France; and many, even after having taken service with France, when they found against whom they were destined to act, broke their agreement and came over to the side of England. Some, indeed, were prevented from executing such a purpose by the discovery of their design; and four of the commanders were executed by the Duke of Anjou, upon the pretence that they had conspired to deliver him to the English.† The principal adherent of France who now attached himself to the Prince of Wales was the famous Canon of Robesart, one of the most renowned knights of the day. No means seem to have been employed to gain him: the act, it would seem, was entirely spontaneous; and whether disgust at the treachery of the King of France, admiration of the chivalrous character of the Black Prince, or some private cause of animosity towards the one, and regard for the other, impelled him; he

* Froissart, chap. DLXXX.
† Hist. de Languedoc, tom. iv. pp. 339, 340.

did homage to the English prince, and remained a faithful and zealous supporter of the English cause.*

This advantage, however, was small in comparison with those which the King of France obtained about the same time by the intrigues of the clergy of Aquitaine, who were generally in his favour. Geoffrey de Vayrolles, Archbishop of Toulouse, forgetting the duties of his sacred calling, and prostituting the office that he held to the basest purposes, went from town to town through a considerable part of the territory lately ceded to England, inciting the inhabitants to break the oath of allegiance they had taken to the English crown. His efforts were so successful, that Cahors and sixty other towns of various descriptions, which had been left without sufficient garrisons to keep them in subjection, yielded themselves to France, and closed their gates against the English troops.

The Black Prince now found that it was absolutely necessary to take some more effectual measures to guard the southern part of the territory; and while he himself remained in Angoulême, and Sir Thomas Whitwell† in the town of Rhodès kept the French in check in Rouergue, he despatched Chandos with as many men as he could spare to make head against the enemy at Montauban.

A larger army was now about to be placed at his disposal; for his father—although the demonstrations of the French generals in Ponthieu and Picardy compelled the King of England to retain a considerable force in the north—could not leave his gallant son in Aquitaine to repel, with a mere handful of men, the principal efforts of France. Scarcely, therefore, had war been declared, when Edward III. despatched Edmund of Langley, Earl of Cambridge, and the Earl of Pembroke, with 500 men at arms and 4000 archers, to the assistance of the Black Prince; and a favourable wind soon wafted the armament to the coast of Britanny. The young duke, John of Montford, of course did

* Froissart, chap. lxxxiii.

† Barnes calls this officer Sir Thomas Wake; and Froissart, though evidently alluding to the same person, spells his name differently in different places. Mr. Johnes, however, has fixed the name as Whitwell; and it appears to me that Froissart intended to express either Whitwell or Whitville.

not refuse a passage through his dominions to those who had so greatly contributed to establish him therein; but the permission which Prince Edmund demanded was not alone for himself and his forces. A very large body of free companions lay upon the frontiers of Britanny, occupying the towns of Château Gontier, in Anjou, and Vire in Normandy; and having engaged to serve the Black Prince in the war in Aquitaine, the immediate march of these troops was a great object with the English generals. While they themselves, therefore, remained at St. Malo, they besought the duke to permit the great companies to pass through his territories in their way to Aquitaine; and some negotiations in consequence took place between John of Montford and his vassals, the Breton barons, whose confidence in the great companies was but small. The result, however, was, that the prince and Lord Pembroke obtained the permission they desired, upon condition of paying for all that their forces required on their march. Although these transactions delayed them some time, they were at length enabled to set out, preceded by the great companies, and after an orderly march through Britanny passed the Loire at Nantes, and proceeded to Angoulême.*

Their arrival at once enabled the prince to commence more active operations; and the coming of Robert Knolles, one of the most attached and gallant commanders in the English service, was scarcely less beneficial to his cause. Knolles, after having distinguished himself most highly in the wars of Britanny, had received from the duke large estates in that province as a reward for his services; but no sooner did the sound of war between France and England reach his ear, than calling his retainers to the field, he hastened to join the Prince at Angoulême. Although sixty men-at-arms and sixty archers† were all that he could bring with him, yet his influence with the leaders of the companies was so great that he soon after won the well known Perducas d'Albret, with a large body of companions, to the service of the prince.‡

Scarcely giving his brother time to repose after his march,

* Froissart, chap lxxxiii. † Barnes, p. 763.
‡ Froissart, chap. DXCII.

Edward the Black Prince now sent the Earl of Cambridge with 3000 men to ravage the territories of the Count de Perrigord, who had been one of the first to resist his authority; and immediate siege was laid to the strong town of Bourdeille. Well garrisoned and well supplied, however, that place protracted its resistance for nine weeks, and in the mean time Lord James Audley, Seneschal of Poitou, entered the lands of the Lord of Chauvigny, and with fire and sword punished his late defection from the prince to whom he had promised fealty. The town of Breuse also fell into the hands of Audley; but many advantages which the French gained at the same time required greater successes on the part of the prince to maintain the glory of the English arms.

Realville, besieged by the Counts of Perrigord and Comminges with 10,000 men,* was taken by storm, and the garrison put to the sword without a man being spared. The castle called Le Roche de Possay was also taken by the French; and Simon Burley, with 200 men, being encountered by a vastly superior force, was defeated and made prisoner between Lusignan and Mirbel. The changing tide of fortune, however, did not continue long unfavourable to England. Robert Knolles marched to the south and laid siege to Durvel; and Chandos, after having taken the town of Fernieres, in the Toulousain, advanced to the assistance of Knolles, taking Moissac on the way. Durvel, however, proved too strong even for the united army which was also repulsed from Dommes: but Gramat, in Quercy, yielded to the English generals on the first summons; and Roquemadour, after gallantly sustaining their attack during a whole day, surrendered on the following morning. A number of other towns followed this example; but the important city of Villefranche, into which all the wealth of the surrounding country had been thrown, offered a more vigorous resistance. At the end of four days, however, during which the assailants endeavoured frequently to carry the place by storm, the garrison, finding it no longer tenable, capitulated, and the English took possession of the town.†

* Froissart, chap. DLXXXVI. DXC. † Froissart, chap. DXCV.

Such were the advantages gained on the part of England in the south, while in other directions two important acquisitions were made by stratagem. The siege of Bourdeille, after continuing nine weeks, promised but little success. The place was full of provisions, and the garrison strong, vigilant, and resolute. At length, however, the very courage and spirit of enterprise which they displayed were made the means of subduing them. A large party of the assailants received orders to advance, and, as usual, skirmish at the barriers. The French met them with good will; and after a certain time the English appeared to give way. The French, to the number of 140, were lured beyond their defences; and while they pursued with eager impetuosity the flying body of English, John of Montague, nephew to the Earl of Salisbury, advanced from a place of concealment which he had found in the neighbourhood, and, with 500 men, interposed between them and the town. For the sake of renown, the French now struggled for some time against the superior power of their assailants, but at length every one was either slain or taken; while another division of the English army forced its way into the town, rendered incapable of any effectual resistance by the absence of so large a part of the garrison.*

The success of this stratagem was not greater than that of a bold attempt, made by a small body of free companions in the service of the Black Prince, upon the strong fortress of Belleperche in the Bourbonnois. Having fixed upon that place as one which, from being situated at some distance from the frontier, was likely to be but negligently watched, three leaders of adventurers, then lying in the Limousin, commenced their march towards the Indre, and reaching the destined spot about dawn, made themselves masters of it by escalade, apparently without the slightest resistance. Sainte Severe, upon the Indre, was also taken by the same band; but in Belleperche was found a more important prisoner than often fell into the hands of adventurers. This was the mother of the queen-consort of France, Isabella, Duchess of Bourbon, who remained long a prisoner in the hands of the companions.

* Froissart, chap. DXCVI.

In this prosperous state were the affairs of England upon the frontiers of Aquitaine towards the autumn of 1369; and it is more than probable that Chandos and his companions might have pushed their successes much farther, as the force at their disposal was considerable, and the utmost harmony existed between the four* celebrated leaders who were for the time united in command. But it would seem that Edward the Black Prince, learning that great preparations had been made by the King of France for carrying on the war against England in the north, and that the Duke of Lancaster had already invaded Picardy, and was marching upon Ponthieu, determined to effect a diversion in favour of his brother, by a movement in the south of France, similar to that which had ended in the battle of Poitiers. We have, indeed, no positive proof of the fact, but it is probable that such was the cause of the recall of Chandos, Felton, and the Captal de Buch from the successful career which they were pursuing. Certain it is that, on the same day, the Black Prince sent messengers to those three officers, commanding them to join him in Angoulême, and ordered back the Earls of Cambridge and Pembroke from Perrigord. All immediately obeyed; and Robert Knolles, who had been directed to remain in the Toulousain, would not accept the command, deprived of the aid of the other three knights, but accompanied them on their return to Angoulême.

The health of Edward the Black Prince, however, was no longer the same as when he led conquering armies to battle; and, with health, had left him, in some degree, that energy of action which had distinguished him above every other commander of the age. The mind still struggled to bear up under the load of bodily infirmity; but though once or twice he took a few steps forward in the same brilliant course along which his early path had lain, yet it was but by laborious and unsteady efforts, like those of a man stag-

* The Captal de Buch, Thomas Felton, Robert Knolles, and John Chandos. Felton and Knolles are generally spoken of as peers by English historians; but though Peter the Cruel in one instrument calls the latter *Dominus* de Knolles, Edward III., at an after period, appoints him conservator of a truce by the title of a knight bachelor. Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 1066. Ed. 1830.

gering on under a burden too heavy for any strength to bear. Whether or not such was the cause which prevented the recall of his principal officers from being followed by any great enterprise remains in doubt; but at the same time it is certain that, shortly after their return, the news must have reached him, of those movements in the north having ceased, which had so strongly called for activity on his part.

CHAPTER XX.

CHARLES V. OF FRANCE PREPARES TO INVADE ENGLAND — THE DUKE OF LANCASTER INVADES AND RAVAGES FRANCE.—THE DUKE OF BURGUNDY ADVANCES TO MEET HIM WITH A SUPERIOR FORCE.—THE TWO ARMIES REMAIN IN PRESENCE FOR SEVERAL DAYS.—THE FRENCH BURN THEIR TENTS AND RETREAT. —THE INVASION OF ENGLAND ABANDONED.—THE DUKE OF LANCASTER RAVAGES FRANCE.—RETURNS TO ENGLAND.—AFFAIRS OF AQUITAINE.—LA ROCHE SUR YONNE SURRENDERS TO THE ENGLISH —LORD JAMES AUDLEY RETIRES FROM ACTIVE LIFE.—UNGENEROUS CONDUCT OF THE EARL OF PEMBROKE.—HE IS SURPRISED IN PUIRENON.—RELIEVED BY CHANDOS.—DEATH OF CHANDOS.—DEATH OF QUEEN PHILIPPA.

In all the wars which had hitherto taken place between France and England since the accession of Edward III. the English had been the attacking party; but the case was now reversed, and the British monarch found himself both assailed and threatened on many points at once. Charles V. of France was not only the first to declare and to commence the war, but he now threatened to carry it into the native dominions of his adversary, and make England itself the scene of hostilities. Rouen was appointed as the rendezvous for his troops; an immense fleet was collected at Harfleur; stores and provisions of all kinds were gathered together in abundance; and the monarch's brother, Philip, the chivalrous and warlike Duke of Burgundy, was nominated to lead the invading army. The Lord of Clisson, however, and all those French officers who best knew the state of England and the English nation, endeavoured to dissuade the French king from the attempt. The simple

words of Froissart are very significant of the fate which an invading force would have met with in England. "The King of England," he says, "his son, the Duke of Lancaster, and many of their advisers, were sufficiently acquainted with the preparation of this army, and with the intention of the French to come and see them, and make war in their country, *of which they were all joyful.*" Instant measures were taken to meet the adversary wherever he should attempt to land; and England was provided "well and sufficiently" for its defence.

In the early part of the year an ineffectual attack had been made upon the town of Ardres, within the pale of the English lands; and either for the purpose of guarding that important part of the territory he had acquired, or with the intention of disturbing the preparations of the French at Rouen, Edward III. commanded the Duke of Lancaster to lead a considerable force to Calais. The famous Walter de Mauny accompanied the young duke; and pressing letters were written to Robert of Namur, whose military experience had been gained in the early wars of Edward, praying him to join once more the English army about to invade France. The Duke of Lancaster, with what forces could be spared from the defence of England, reached Calais towards the middle of August,* and immediately began to ravage the neighbouring districts of France. The Count of St. Paul with a considerable force lay in the strong town of Terrouanne; but his numbers did not justify him in taking the field against the English. Thus the county of Guisnes and the Boulonnois were swept of all their produce, and daily accounts reached the

* Chroniques de France, chap. xxiv. Almost all the English chronicles state that the Duke of Lancaster did not reach Calais till the 8th of September or thereabout; but although, in general, in regard to the events taking place in England, their account would seem to be preferred, yet it is utterly inadmissible in the present instance, as it is clearly established, that after all the events which we are about to relate, and after lying in presence of the French army for several days, the Duke of Lancaster began his return to Calais on the 14th of September, while the intervening events must have occupied several weeks. I have therefore adopted the statement of the French chronicles, though they do not furnish the exact date.

King of France at Rouen of the successes of the duke and the injury inflicted upon his subjects.

The army destined by him for the invasion of England was just about to set sail,* but many considerations induced him to delay its departure. It seemed unnecessary to seek the English in their own country, when they were already in force in his territories. The reflection might also occur to him, that it would be not a little imprudent to drain his kingdom of the flower of her nobility and the great body of her feudal forces at the very moment that an enemy's army was on his shores ready to snatch whatever advantages circumstances might present. He perhaps remembered that, at the best, ere his own expedition could be successful, his adversary's troops might once more be at the gates of Paris; and that if his attempt upon England failed, as many of his best advisers believed it would, certain ruin to France, would be the consequence of its defeat. Under these circumstances, the expedition of the Duke of Burgundy was countermanded; and in the very week fixed for his embarkation, he received orders to march against the Duke of Lancaster.

Passing the Somme at the bridge of Abbeville, the French leader advanced towards Hesdin, supported by one of the strongest armies that France had brought into the field since the commencement of the war. This force, also was daily increased by the junction of various bodies from the different garrisons on his line of march; and by the time he came in sight of the Duke of Lancaster, Philip of Burgundy had under his command 4000 knights,† which implied a force of horse and foot scarcely equalled by that which followed King John to Poitiers.

His movements had all been made known to the English commanders in the neighbourhood of Calais; and John of Gaunt, although his army did not contain one for every seven of the French host, advanced without hesitation to encounter the enemy. The valley of Tournehem afforded a strong position for the English forces; and taking measures to fortify themselves on the side where the ground was most accessible, the English commanders awaited the

* Froissart, chap. DCII.

† Froissart, chap. DCII.

approach of the Duke of Burgundy. The seasonable arrival of the Count of Namur with 100 lances and a proportionate body of light troops, although it added but little to the strength of the English force, brought to the camp and council of the Duke of Lancaster an active and energetic soldier, and an experienced commander. The English army was plentifully supplied with provisions from Calais, and the neighbouring country; and commanders and soldiers, with the firm resolution of not avoiding a battle, saw with joy the approach of the enemy, notwithstanding the immense superiority of the force they had to encounter.

The Duke of Burgundy took up a position on a rising ground in the neighbourhood, and day after day both armies were under arms, expecting instant battle; but it would appear from the account of Froissart, that although the nominal command of the French host was confided to the brother of the king, his powers did not extend so far as to justify him in risking an engagement without the consent of the monarch himself.* The folly of making the actions of a general, who on the spot can see and judge of of the circumstances, depend upon the will of a person at a distance, who can obtain but faint ideas of the facts from written communications, has produced the same effects in all ages, namely, signal defeat or lost opportunity. The Duke of Burgundy remained in presence of the Duke of Lancaster without permission to attack him, till both general and soldiers were weary and dispirited. Some of the most enterprising of the knights on both sides kept their zeal from cooling by chivalrous skirmishes; and in one night attack made upon the English camp, without the knowledge of the French marshals, a body of 300 men-at-arms might have caused no small loss and disarray amongst the forces of the Duke of Lancaster, had it not been for the activity and presence of mind of Robert of Namur.

At length, harassed and disgusted, the Duke of Burgundy demanded permission from his brother either to fight or to retire; and in reply received an order to retreat. This was accordingly executed, though from the position of the two armies it was a task of some difficulty; but

* Froissart, chap. DCX.

private commands being given to the various leaders, the French army was put in readiness to march at midnight on the 12th of September.* When all was prepared, the tents were set on fire, and the army began its march. As flame after flame was seen to break out in the French camp, the rumour of the enemy's forces being in motion roused the English leaders from repose, and they instantly held a council to consider their farther proceedings. No unanimity, however, could be obtained; the greater part of the persons present insisting that the French were marching to attack them, while Sir Walter de Mauny contended that they were in full retreat, and that if the duke would follow cautiously he might obtain considerable advantages. Even if anything could have been really effected against the French forces at the immediate moment of their retreat, the opportunity was lost in discussion; and a body of horse, which was at length sent out to reconnoitre, only returned with the tidings, that the adverse army was no longer to be seen, nothing remaining on the spot it lately occupied but a few straggling followers and the burning tents. The Duke of Lancaster did justice to the sagacity of De Mauny; and after having supped on the spot where the enemy had been encamped, he struck his tents and returned to Calais.

An army which had remained for nearly a week in presence of an infinitely inferior force without attempting to bring on a battle, was of course not in a state of mind fitted for such an undertaking as the invasion of England; and leading his troops to St. Omer the Duke of Burgundy, by the command of his brother, dismissed a host which had been brought together with great trouble and expense, and which was not likely to be raised again in France for many years.

Not so the Duke of Lancaster, who, after having refreshed his troops during three days in Calais, once more issued forth, determined apparently to make the north of France bitterly regret the breach of the treaty of Bretigny, by carrying fire and sword through the land, and by sweeping the whole open country rather than attempting

* Chron. de France, chap. xxiv

to take any of the towns and fortresses which lay in his way. Well convinced that no force sufficient to give him battle could soon be brought into the field on the part of France, all his motions indicate the boldness of perfect security. The territories of the Count of St. Paul, who had been the principal actor, both in the underhand negotiations and military operations, by which Ponthieu had been wrested from the English crown, were the first to suffer; and scarcely a blade of glass was left beside another in all that fertile district. Many of the open towns and villages were burned, but none of the fortresses were even attacked; and marching on into Ponthieu, the duke proceeded to visit with the same desolating system of warfare Vimeu and the county of Eu, never advancing more than three or four leagues per diem, and then halting to lay waste the district round him. Passing on by the archbishopric of Rouen, and sweeping the country in the neighbourhood of Dieppe, the English army next approached Harfleur, apparently with the intention of burning the fleet which had been collected in that port. By this time, however, a considerable French force, under the Count of St. Paul and the Constable De Fiennes, hung upon the rear of the English army, and the count boldly throwing himself into Harfleur, with 200 spears, saved both the town and fleet.

During three days the English army lay before Harfleur; but, resolved not to deviate from the course he had hitherto pursued, the Duke of Lancaster would not attempt the siege, when he found that the town had been placed in a condition to resist. The year was now near its close, also, and turning on his steps, the English prince began his retreat towards Calais, still ravaging the country through which he passed. The last event of any importance which occurred during this successful expedition was the capture of Hue (or Hugh) de Chatillon, grand master of the cross-bow-men of France, who, with the Count of St. Paul, had contributed greatly to the subjection of Ponthieu. He was now taken in an ambuscade as the English army passed in the neighbourhood of Abbeville; and, by a singular chance, the person by whose hand he was captured was Nicholas of Louvain, lately Seneschal of Ponthieu for the

King of England, whom he had himself both deceived and defeated in the beginning of the year.*

At Calais the Duke of Lancaster dismissed the foreign auxiliaries who had joined him in France;† and with a promise to return early in the spring, and lead them once more into the territories of the enemy, he set sail and returned to England.

While these events were passing in Picardy and Ponthieu, the forces which the Black Prince had assembled at Angoulême were not inactive, though his increasing illness prevented his taking the field in person. The first success obtained by the English in that part of France was the capture of La Roche sur Yonne in Poitou. The force led against it was large, and furnished with every sort of machine for battering the walls, as a vigorous defence was anticipated from the strength of the place, and the state of preparation in which it was known to have been placed by the Duke of Anjou. No very active measures, however, were required: the governor was weak though brave; and seeing himself besieged by an army which he could not hope ultimately to repel, he was easily induced to enter into a treaty by which he covenanted to deliver the fortress to the English at the end of a month, if he were not relieved before that time by some effort on the part of France. He took every measure to make his situation known to the king and the Duke of Anjou, but no succour was afforded him; and at the expiration of the term the fortress was delivered to the English army. The commander retired to Angers, where he was instantly arrested; and a sum of money which had been paid by the English for the provisions and ammunition in the castle, though not more than their real value, was made a pretext in order to gratify the resentment of the Duke of Anjou for the loss of the fortress.‡ An act of weakness was construed into an act of treason; and the unhappy commander was drowned in the Loire, on the charge of having sold the town to the enemy.

* He had also taken the seneschal, who was now only at liberty in consequence of having paid a very severe ransom.

† Froissart, chap. dcxiii.

‡ Froissart, chap. D[illegible]

Shortly after this event, Edward the Black Prince was deprived of the services of one of his best friends and most gallant officers, whose presence and whose counsels might have prevented that relaxation of discipline and order to which the increasing illness of the prince shortly gave rise, and which, of course, was fertile in disadvantages to the affairs of England in Aquitaine. The famous James Audley, who had acquired immortal renown as a knight at the battle of Poitiers, and who had since conciliated all parties by his conduct as Seneschal of Poitou, though in the prime of his days, retired from active life so completely as to give rise to a statement of his death, about this time, in many contemporary chronicles.* The unexpected loss of his son at Fontenay le Comte is generally supposed to have been the cause of his leaving a prince to whom he was so strongly attached, at the moment when his services were most necessary; and though the firm and resolute character of Audley might lead us to suppose such a motive insufficient to account for such a measure, none other has been pointed out on any good authority.

Audley departed from Aquitaine, with the permission and good wishes of the prince; and Chandos, whose renown as a knight was equal, and his skill as a general perhaps superior, was appointed to succeed him as Seneschal of Poitou. Chandos, however, was not long ere he experienced some of those inconveniences which, perhaps, Audley had already felt. No sooner had he entered upon the duties of his new office than he prepared to make an incursion into Anjou, proposing to return by Touraine,—an expedition which, had it been accomplished with all the disposable force at that time in the north of Aquitaine, must inevitably have called the attention of the French

* Barnes, p. 770. Froissart positively states that he died at Fontenay le Comte, and that the Prince of Wales himself attended his funeral in deep grief. Barnes, however, proves from undoubted sources that Audley lived till the 1st April, 1386; and as it is certain that his son, likewise a knight, and bearing the same baptismal name as his father, died at the very period to which Froissart attributes the death of the Seneschal of Poitou, it is more than probable that the chronicler was deceived by the identity of the names.

commanders from the south, and effected a powerful diversion in favour of the Duke of Lancaster. In order to augment his forces, as far as possible, Chandos summoned the Earl of Pembroke, who was then lying with a considerable body of men at Mortagne,* to join him with all speed; but, to his disappointment and surprise, he met with a direct refusal. On a former occasion, the Earl of Pembroke had displayed no small inactivity in complying with the summons of Henry Earl of Lancaster, to aid in the relief of Auberoche, and strong signs of envious jealousy, when he found that a battle had been fought, and the place relieved without his assistance. Jealousy, too, of the renown of Chandos, suggested by some of his idle flatterers, is assigned by Froissart as the cause of the earl's refusal in the present instance.

Chandos, though angry and disappointed, proceeded to execute, as far as his forces permitted, the project he had formed, but he was obliged to confine his operations to ravaging a part of Anjou and Touraine, and sweeping the territories of the Viscount de Rochechouart, one of the revolted barons of Aquitaine. At Chauvigny, however, the Seneschal of Poitou received notice that the Maréchal de Sancerre, with a large corps, occupied La Haie, in Touraine; and, eager to give him battle, Chandos once more sent a herald to the Earl of Pembroke, begging to join him at Chatellerault, and aid in the attack he proposed to make upon the enemy. The earl, however, again refused; and Chandos, finding his force incompetent to the undertaking, was obliged to abandon his design and return mortified and disgusted to Poitiers.

No sooner did the Earl of Pembroke hear that Chandos had retired than taking the field himself with 300 men-at-arms, and the usual proportion of lighter troops, he advanced in exactly the same direction that the seneschal had followed. Correct intelligence of all these proceedings, it would seem, was conveyed to the Maréchal de Sancerre

* Froissart calls this place Mortagne sur Mer; but I cannot conceive, from the position of the various places which are mentioned in the subsequent events, that he can refer to any other town than Mortagne on the Sevre Nantaise, which at present is many leagues distant from the sea.

with great rapidity; and although he had not dared to attack Chandos, whose consummate skill and prudence he well knew, he instantly laid a plan for surprising the Earl of Pembroke, whose presumption and vanity had not failed to reach his ears, and had of course produced their natural effect in generating contempt. Calling together what troops he could muster, he approached as secretly as possible towards the English army, which was marching on with perfect unconsciousness of danger. At a small village, called by Froissart Puirenon, on the verge of Poitou, the Earl of Pembroke halted about noon to dine; and throughout his whole force arms were cast aside, precautions abandoned, and every one gave themselves up to ease and enjoyment. From this state the English were soon roused by the attack of the Maréçhal de Sancerre and his followers, who, galloping down into the town with levelled lances, put every one to death they met. A number were slain in the streets, and a number in the houses; and, before the Earl of Pembroke and his chief companions could issue forth to oppose the French, more than 120 of his men had been killed or taken. Assembling as fast as they could, the English now offered a vigorous resistance to the superior force of the French: the earl and his principal knights were enabled to effect their retreat to one of the old fortified houses of the suppressed order of the Temple, and there maintained themselves against the whole power of the French till nightfall. By this time the troops of the Maréchal de Sancerre were no less tired than those of the Earl of Pembroke; and taking measures to insure that the English did not escape, the French commander withdrew his men from the attack.

The night, however, was dark and foggy; and a squire attached to the Earl of Pembroke contrived to effect a passage through the French watchers in order to bear a message from the Earl to Chandos. The obscurity, however, which had favoured him at first, embarrassed him afterwards, and it was late ere he reached Poitiers. His message was soon told; but Chandos had not forgot the late conduct of the earl; and, receiving the messenger coldly, he proceeded to hear mass, after which he entered the hall, where dinner was prepared, without showing any

intention of aiding the party besieged in Puirenon. While he was washing his hands, according to custom, before seating himself at table, another of the Earl of Pembroke's squires, for whom a way had been opened at the back of the temple house, which the French were assailing in front, appeared in the hall; and presenting the earl's signet to Chandos, he besought him, in the name of his master, to afford some immediate aid to the party of English at Puirenon.

Chandos still received him coldly, saying that if the situation of the earl were so bad as the squire reported it, all aid would come too late; and then adding, "Let us dine," he placed himself at table. At the second course, however, good feelings got the better of resentment; and observing to those who sat near him that the Earl of Pembroke was a noble lord, the son-in-law of the King of England,* and the brother in arms of his dear lord, the Earl of Cambridge, he pushed the tables from him, exclaiming, "To horse! to horse! I will ride to Puirenon."

All was soon prepared; and Chandos, with more than 200 lances, was soon beyond the gates of Poitiers. The quick wings of rumour, however, flew on before, and carried the news of his approach to the Maréchal de Sancerre, who, judging that his troops, fatigued as they were with continual efforts against the Earl of Pembroke, would be unequal to cope with the force which was marching against him, secured what booty and prisoners he had taken, and retreated to La Roche Posay. The Earl of Pembroke and his friends well divined the cause of the retreat of the French; but unwilling to remain a moment longer than necessary in a situation where they had suffered so much, they hastened to leave the house of the Templars, and soon after met the Seneschal of Poitou and his forces advancing to their relief.

The courage, the skill, and courtesy of Chandos, were not destined long to defend the cause of his dying prince, or to ardorn the office that he held; and, with a fate not uncommon, he who had fought and conquered in so many

* He had married Margaret, fourth daughter of Edward III. and Philippa.

general battles was slain in a casual skirmish with a handful of enemies. The small town of St. Savin,* at a short distance from Poitiers, had been captured by the French some time before, and its loss seemed to affect Chandos more than many events of apparently greater importance.† After making several unsuccessful attempts to recover it, he at length set out with a large force on the night of the 31st of December, 1369, in the hope of taking the town by surprise; but the unexpected blowing of the warder's horn, on the arrival of a small party of French, who came to aid the garrison in an expedition into Poitou, was supposed by the English to be a sign that their purpose was discovered, and without farther attempt they retired to Chauvigny on the Creuse. There Chandos announced that all the nobles of Poitou who had accompanied him might return to their territories; and, shortly after, he sent back his companion Sir Thomas Percy also towards Rochelle, remaining with not more than forty lances in Chauvigny, disappointed and sad at the ill success of his expedition. Thus as he stood by the fire in the inn,—while his followers were endeavouring to beguile his melancholy by every means in their power,—a peasant entered in haste and informed him that he had seen a party of the French take the field under the command of the Lord Louis of St. Julian, the governor of the very town which the seneschal had set out to attack. For the first time in his life, however, Chandos showed no disposition to buckle on his armour at the sound of war, saying, "Let them ride for me, I will not ride against them."‡

After a moment's thought, however, he determined to follow them,§ and taking the road towards Lusac, came

* On the Gartempe, at the distance of about thirty miles from Poitiers.

† Barnes, p. 783.

‡ Froissart, chap. dcxiv.

§ Froissart, Barnes, and others, declare that Chandos overtook the French as he was returning from Chauvigny to Poitiers; but such a statement is quite inconsistent with the fact of his having been killed at the bridge of Lusac, which is totally out of the way from Chauvigny to Poitiers. Sir Thomas Percy might naturally pass Lusac in going to Rochelle, but Chandos must have purposely deviated from his road to Poitiers to reach the spot where he was

upon traces which showed plainly that either the French party or that of Sir Thomas Percy was in advance. It so happened that Percy had crossed the river Vienne in the neighbourhood of Chauvigny, and was at that moment marching on at the distance of about a league before Chandos on the other side of the stream; while the band of French were at the same distance from the English general on the eastern bank of the river which he himself was pursuing. As morning dawned, Sir Thomas Percy perceived the banners of the French, and hastened forward to take possession of the bridge of Lusac before the adversary could reach it. In this he was successful; and while the French were in the very act of consulting how they might best dislodge him, Chandos appeared in their rear. The bridge of Lusac, however, was so high in the centre that the seneschal and his followers were unaware of the vicinity of Sir Thomas Percy and his troop, who were in possession of the other end of the bridge and Chandos rode forward towards the enemy without being conscious of the advantage he possessed.

The French had dismounted from their horses to attack the bridge; but as soon as the flight of the attendants, whom they had left in their rear with their horses, gave them notice of the approach of another enemy, they faced about to receive the charge, which they had every reason to expect. Chandos, though he seems to have held his present opponents very light, advanced slowly towards them on horseback, and for a minute or two continued to jeer the leaders of the opposite party in a manner unusual with him. While he did so, however, a French man-at-arms, unable to restrain his anger, advanced before his comrades, and with a blow of his lance struck one of the English squires from his horse. Chandos, hearing a noise, turned to see the cause, exclaiming, "How now! will you let that man be killed? On foot! on foot!" and springing to the ground he made his companions dismount.

The squire was rescued in a moment, and Chandos at once led on his men against the French. He used no visor

killed; so that there can be very little doubt he was actually in pursuit of the French party.

to his helmet; and on the present occasion wore, instead of the short coat of arms usually carried over the armour, a long robe of white satin, bearing his device; and hanging down to his feet. A heavy dew had fallen in the morning; and at the very moment that the two forces joined in the encounter, Chandos either entangled his foot in the long robe he wore, or slipped upon the moist grass. As he fell a French squire, named James of St. Martin, struck him a blow in the face with his lance, just beneath an eye which had been deprived of sight some years before by a stag. The want of a visor exposed his face entirely, and his fall at the moment gave the blow additional force, so that the steel seems to have entered into his brain. Seeing him writhe upon the ground the French caught him by the shoulders, and would have drawn him within their line, but his uncle, Sir Edward Clifford, strode over him and drove back the assailants. The French, however, were superior in number to the English; and, after a long and severe struggle, almost all the followers of Chandos were slain or taken, except a small and desperate band which, with Sir Edward Clifford, fought around the body of their dying leader. The French, we are told, would willingly have contented themselves with this success, and would have carried off what prisoners they had made, had not the grooms and pages, in their first terror at the approach of Chandos, set free the horses of the French men-at-arms. In the mean time, Guichard d'Angle, and the other lords and knights who had quitted Chandos on the preceding night, having heard that the French were ravaging the country, had turned in pursuit of them, and the banners and pennons of the partisans of England began to appear on the rising ground beyond Lusac. They were soon perceived by the French, who, unable to fly, and incapable of resisting a fresh attack, resorted to the expedient of surrendering to their own prisoners.

Sorrow and consternation spread amongst the barons of Poitou when they beheld the state of their seneschal, who, though he appeared to perceive and feel for their anxiety, was incapable of speaking. The deep, bitter grief of all his followers, as recorded by Froissart, is the best eulogium of the famous John Chandos: burning tears,

we are told, rolled from the eyes that had seen Poitiers and Najarra; and the hands which had couched the spear and wielded the battle-axe with remorseless vigour in a thousand fights, now smote the breast and tore the hair, for the death of the flower of courtesy and chivalry. Disarmed upon the field, and placed on bucklers and targets, Chandos was carried to Mortemar, where he died on the following day;* and his death was not only wept by the gallant master who shared and admired his virtues, nor by the friends and countrymen to whom he had so long been a companion and a support; even the enemy mourned for him; the King of France expressed his deep regret; and the gallant chivalry of the adverse territory grieved over the death of one whom they had esteemed even in the reverses he had inflicted upon them.†

Another loss, which he felt most bitterly, had lately befallen the Black Prince in the death of his mother Philippa, who died at Windsor on the 15th of August in the same year. To whatever cause the changes which afterwards took place in the conduct of Edward III. may be ascribed, certain it is that the decease of Philippa, which was a national misfortune, was doubly so to the Prince of Wales; and after seeing the tomb close both over the mother whose virtues he had inherited, and whose love and support he had always enjoyed, and over the friend who had always counselled him aright in the cabinet, and upheld him vigorously in the field, Edward the Black Prince might well say, "I have lost but too much this year on both sides of the sea."

* Chandos left a very considerable part of the large property he had acquired to Edward the Black Prince.

† Froissart mentions having heard that the squire who killed Chandos was suffered to die at Poitiers from neglect, no care having been taken of his wounds. He does not absolutely say that this act of cruelty was done in a spirit of vengeance, but it is not improbable that it was so, if the act took place at all, and certainly, under such circumstances, a baser act never was committed. However much Chandos might be regretted, the man who slew him was but doing his duty to his king and his country.

CHAPTER XXI.

SUCCESSES OF THE FRENCH IN AQUITAINE.—THE DUKES OF BERRY AND ANJOU TAKE THE FIELD.—DU GUESCLIN RECALLED FROM SPAIN.—THE BLACK PRINCE'S PREPARATIONS FOR RESISTANCE.—EDWARD III. ATTEMPTS TO CONCILIATE THE REVOLTED BARONS.—VAST SUCCESS OF DU GUESCLIN AND THE DUKE OF ANJOU.—LIMOGES BESIEGED BY THE DUKE OF BERRY.—TREASON OF THE BISHOP.—THE TOWN CAPITULATES.—DU GUESCLIN RECEIVES THE SWORD OF CONSTABLE.—DARING EXPEDITION OF SIR ROBERT KNOLLES.—A PART OF HIS TROOPS DEFEATED BY DU GUESCLIN.—EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE BESIEGES LIMOGES.—TAKING AND SACK OF THAT CITY.

THE year 1370 began with losses on the part of England, and went on to bring forth, at least in Aquitaine, successes on the part of France such as her arms had not known for nearly fifty years. Chatellerault was the first town of any importance which was captured from the English, and France owed this advantage to the same officers before whom Chandos himself had fallen. Belleperche was next besieged by the Duke of Bourbon, whose mother still remained within its walls a prisoner; and notwithstanding the march of the Earl of Cambridge with a strong army to its relief, the duke could neither be brought to risk a general battle nor abandon the siege. The free companions, however, who held it, were enabled to march out ere it became no longer tenable, and with them they brought forth the unfortunate Duchess of Bourbon, and her attendants, much to the annoyance of the Black Prince, who declared that had her captors been any of his regular followers, he would have forced them to deliver her up to her relations.* She was soon after exchanged, however, for Simon Burley, who had been taken in the preceding year, though by all parties her detention seems to have been considered as a blot upon the chivalry of those who captured her.*

* Froissart, chap. DCXXI. DCXXIV.

Great efforts were now making on the part of the sovereign of France to carry on the war more vigorously than he had hitherto been enabled to accomplish; and, as a preliminary step, he sought to deliver his territories from an internal enemy, by concluding a peace at Vernon with the King of Navarre, who agreed, on various advantageous considerations, to renounce all alliances with the King of England,* and remain faithful to the crown of France. Large armies were also called into the field by the Dukes of Berry, Anjou, and Bourbon; and in May and June the direction in which the chief force of the French empire was destined to act became evident from the concentration of these forces upon the principality of Aquitaine. The Duke of Anjou arrived at Toulouse towards the middle of July; the Duke of Berry fixed his head-quarters at Bourges; and the Duke of Bourbon mustered his forces in Forez and on the frontiers of Auvergne.

Although the wars in which they had lately been engaged had given to each of these princes a certain degree of military skill, yet, in order to direct aright the efforts of the large army that now menaced Aquitaine, some general leader was required, who combined that original genius for war which almost all great generals have early displayed, with that experience which is the guide and guardian of genius, and that renown which commands immediate deference and obedience. This want had not been overlooked by Charles V. of France; and with the keen sagacity for which he was justly famous, he had at once singled out the man who combined such qualities, and was best fitted to lead the armies of France. This was the famous Bertrand Du Guesclin, who had been defeated by Chandos at Auray, and by Edward the Black Prince at Najarra, but who had gained as much glory in his defeats as many another general has gained in victories; and who was yet destined to add to that renown by an almost uninterrupted course of success.†

To him Charles had already written several times, recalling him from Spain, where the cause of Henry of

* Mém de Charles II. Roi de Nav. tom. i. part ii. p. 128, &c.
† Lobineau, Hist. de Bretagne, lib. xii. p. 390.

Transtamare was now fully established, and holding out the prospect of honour and high fortune in France. Du Guesclin obeyed the king's commands, and taking leave of Henry, he set out for Toulouse, which city he reached shortly after the arrival of the Duke of Anjou. The army which he found prepared to take the field amounted to 2000 men-at-arms, and 6000 of those lighter armed troops which were then called brigands, from a piece of armour, named a brigandine, which they wore; and with these he immediately commenced the campaign by marching against Moissac.

In the mean time measures had been taken on the part of England both to defend the principality and to effect a diversion, by attacking France on the side which had been left exposed. For the latter object Robert Knolles was recalled from Aquitaine and despatched to Calais at the head of 1500 men-at-arms, and 4000 archers; while, in the principality itself, Edward issued his summons to all the barons of the province, who remained faithful to him, commanding them to join him with all speed in Angoulême. To aid him, also, against the great force by which he was menaced, his brother the Duke of Lancaster was despatched by Edward III. to Gascony, accompanied by 400 men-at-arms, and a large body of archers.

In the latter part of the preceding year, however, an act had been performed by the English monarch which was more calculated to injure the Black Prince in the territories which he held in France than the aid which he now sent was likely to do good. On the 5th of November, 1369,* Edward III. issued letters patent condemning and annulling the taxes which had been laid upon the people of Aquitaine by his son; and commanding the Gas-

* This document is given in Froissart, and is dated in the 44th year of the reign of Edward III., on which account Monsieur Dacier proposes to place it under the year 1370, in which year undoubtedly began the 44th of Edward's reign. Either Froissart, however, or some of his copyists, must have mistaken the date, which is in figures, or else the document is fictitious altogether, which is very unlikely, as it bears every mark of authenticity. But it is clear that it cannot belong to 1370, as the Duke of Lancaster, the principal witness, was in Aquitaine during the whole of the latter part of that year.

con lords to apply to him for redress if they found themselves aggrieved. These he caused to be circulated privately amongst the revolted barons, as well as amongst those who remained faithful to the prince; but, as might be anticipated, the measure produced no effect. None of those who had cast off their allegiance returned to submission; and the act which was intended to conciliate was only received and treated as a proof of weakness. No doubt can exist that had the barons of Aquitaine appealed to Edward III. as sovereign, in what was called *dernier resort*, against any of the actions of the Prince of Wales, the king, notwithstanding the complete cession of the principality to his son, would have been justified by every feudal law in hearing and deciding their cause. But the barons had not appealed to him,—they had not even appealed, in the first place, to the States General of Aquitaine, but had fled at once to a foreign monarch, and Edward therefore had no right to consider them as anything but revolted subjects. It may be said, that they could not hope that a father would do strict justice against his son, and that even the states were under the influence of the prince: but the same evil existed in all feudal governments, and though the system might be defective, it was that under which they lived, whether attached to France or England. It was evident, therefore, that though the fouage might be vexatious, it was more the pretext than the motive for abandoning their adherence to the English crown; and that Edward III., by gratuitously condemning the proceedings of his son in regard to persons who had never appealed to him for justice, could only degrade the prince in the eyes of those he had been appointed to govern, without recalling a single individual to obedience. To the letters patent, which contained the royal abolition of the fouage, the name of John Duke of Lancaster is attached as the principal witness; and although there can be little doubt that the rumour which attributed the sickness of the Black Prince to poison administered by a brother was false and calumnious, yet it is probable that such a report originated in the ambitious rivalry which John of Gaunt not unfrequently displayed towards the Prince of Wales. Edward, though it is clear that he saw the ambition of his brother, seems

never to have evinced the slightest animosity towards him, confining his own proceedings to precautions in regard to England generally, which showed much prudence and wisdom, and to measures for insuring that crown, which he now felt was never destined for his own brow, to the children he was about to leave exposed to the intrigues of artful and interested men. Whether the counsels of John of Gaunt did not really tend to produce that condemnation of his conduct which Edward could not but feel with deep mortification, or whether the prince, in ignorance of the facts, did not attribute any participation in the letters of censure, to his brother, we are pointedly told that he received the duke on his arrival with joy and affection.

Before his coming, however, the Black Prince was already at the head of a considerable army, which had been assembled at Cognac; but long ere a sufficient force had been collected to enable Edward to take the field, the progress of the enemy had been such as to require efforts equal to those of his best days to recover the losses he had sustained.

The Duke of Anjou, accompanied by Du Guesclin, had, as we have seen, set out from Toulouse in the latter part of July, and in the short space of one month they had made an incursion into the English territory, and gained advantages for France which did the highest honour to both commanders. Between Toulouse and Moissac they were joined by a considerable body of companions; by which accession their force was augmented to between nine and ten thousand fighting men—an army far better calculated to obtain success than the immense and unwieldy armaments which France had sometimes brought into the field. It may have been remarked that throughout the wars between France and England great hosts uniformly effected not only little in relation to their magnitude, but little when compared with what much smaller armies accomplished. This singular fact, that all great victories and all great advantages were always obtained by very small bodies of men, may, perhaps, be ascribed to three causes,—the incoherent nature of feudal armies, the absence of proper discipline, and the total ignorance of commissariat economy which

then prevailed.* These defects rendered large forces very difficult to govern, and very difficult to provide for; the first effect showing itself strongly in all general engagements, and the latter in every military expedition of those times.

Besides the benefit felt by the Duke of Anjou in having an army both superior in numbers to any that could be brought against him, and sufficiently limited to be easily ruled and supplied without difficulty, the constitution of his force itself, comprising the great body of the revolted barons of Gascony, with whom personal hatred towards the enemy, and the memory of mutual wrongs, came in aid of courage and discipline, was in itself no small advantage. Neither was skill wanting to employ the force thus constituted to the best advantage. Moissac surrendered without resistance; and its example was followed by Agen, Tonneins, Port St. Marie, and Montpesat. Aiguillon, with all its strength, held out but four days; and forty towns and fortresses were captured before the month of August was at an end. In many cases, it is true, treason within was more powerful than war without; but in one instance at least the due reward fell upon the heads of those who practised it. The small town of La Linde, on the Dordagne, was at that time, we are told, strongly fortified and well provisioned, having been visited and prepared for resistance, scarcely fourteen days before, by the Captal de Buch, who commanded in the neighbouring town of Bergerac. The burghers of the town, however, were strongly disposed to embrace the French cause; and no sooner had the Duke of Anjou sat down before the place than negotiations were commenced for delivering it into his hands. The strength of the town was only made use of by the citizens and the captain of the garrison, a Gascon named Thomas de Batefol, for the purpose of en-

* Even the commissariat measures of Edward III. on his last invasion of France, which were almost looked upon as miraculous by the feudal nobles of Germany, who joined him near Calais, merely consisted in carrying great supplies with him, and means for preparing food more rapidly than was then usual; but he does not seem to have taken any measures for preventing those ravages, which inflicted often as much evil on the invading army itself as on the countries that were invaded.

hancing the price of their treason; but at length the bargain was concluded; and on condition of receiving a certain sum in gold, the governor agreed to open the gates to the French at break of day on the following morning. It would seem that but small precaution had been taken to conceal these negotiations within the town; and some one more attached to the interests of England than the rest hastened to Bergerac to communicate the news to the Captal de Buch and Thomas Felton. Mounting in haste, the two commanders set off for La Linde, accompanied by 200 men-at-arms, and reached the gate on the side of Bergerac just as the dawn was beginning to appear. Their name and station obtained instant admission, and riding straight through the town, they directed their course towards the opposite gate which opened in front of the French camp. Ere they reached that side of the town, however, they dismounted, and, approaching without noise, found the captain of the garrison in the very act of delivering the city to the French. The captal, however, was upon him before he was aware; and exclaiming, "Ha, false traitor! thou shalt die the first! Never shalt thou commit treason more!"* he passed his sword through his body, and leaving him dead upon the spot advanced against the French, a small party of whom were already within the gates. The sight of his banner, however, and that of Lord Felton, were sufficient to cause the French to retreat; and making the best of their way through the open gate, they left the garrison to the mercy of the commanders they had attempted to betray. No further severity, however, was shown: and contenting themselves with the death of the chief traitor, the captal and his companion remained in the town till the Duke of Anjou thought fit to raise the siege and turn his steps in another direction.

While the army which had been collected at Toulouse had thus obtained great advantages for France, that which the Duke of Berry had assembled at Bourges, less in number, and commanded by officers of less military skill, had not been so successful. The Limousin had been ravaged, it is true, but no place of any importance had fallen; and

* Froissart, chap. DCXXVII.

though the duke had advanced to the siege of Limoges,* but little chance existed that a strong city, well garrisoned and plentifully supplied with provisions, would surrender to an army of less than six thousand men, while a large force was mustering at Cognac for its relief. Such was the state of affairs in Aquitaine, when the Duke of Anjou received letters from his brother strongly urging him to detach a body of his troops under Du Guesclin to aid in pressing the siege of Limoges.* At the same time, however, the presence of Du Guesclin in Paris was demanded by the king himself; and his messengers also bore the tidings that a large English army, under Sir Robert Knolles, had landed at Calais,† and was marching on with rapid steps towards Paris, ravaging the country as it advanced. Perhaps, under these circumstances, Du Guesclin might have proceeded at once to Paris, had it not appeared that the Duke of Berry had established a secret negotiation with Jean de Cros, Bishop of Limoges, who, in consequence of the esteem in which he was held by the Black Prince, had been rendered more powerful within the walls of the besieged city than even the commander of the garrison himself.

With this hope of speedily terminating the siege, Du Guesclin advised the Duke of Anjou to throw garrisons into the principal places he had taken, and thus dispersing the greater part of his forces, to retire to Cahors, and take advantage of whatever opportunities might occur for carrying on the war upon a smaller scale.

While this plan was put in execution, the gallant Breton led a small body to reinforce the army of the Duke of Berry; but no hostile measures were required to compel the surrender of Limoges. The citizens were all gained over to the party of France; the bishop was the most active leader of the disaffected; and early in September Limoges capitulated. The bishop and all the inhabitants swore fealty to the crown of France; and the Duke of Berry, well contented with the acquisition, placed a strong garrison in the place, dispersed his forces, and retired.

* Froissart, chap. DCXXXIII.
† July, 1370. Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 171.

After a short stay in the Limousin,* Du Guesclin hastened to Paris, where he received the sword of constable,† and instantly took measures to cut short an expedition, in regard to the previous progress of which some account must here be given. With 1500 men-at-arms and 4000 archers and a body of light troops, Sir Robert Knolles, one of the most enterprising of the English commanders, had set out from Calais in the end of July in order to effect a diversion in favour of the Black Prince, by calling the attention of the French king to the northern provinces of his kingdom; and no one could have executed such a mission with greater boldness and success. Artois, Picardy, and the Isle de France, were one after the other ravaged and laid under contribution. The Vermandois, the Soissonnois, and a considerable part of Champagne were also pillaged; and at length, during two days, the country immediately round Paris itself was given up to fire and sword, beneath the eyes of the inhabitants of the capital.‡ Turning thence towards Anjou and Maine, the English general led his troops to the neighbourhood of Le Mans; but by this time dissension had spread amongst the various officers serving under him, and disobedience and insubordination were the consequences.§ A considerable part of the forces led by a Sir John Menstreworth, a personal enemy of the general,

* The account given by Barnes, p. 803, and in a great degree confirmed by Froissart, chap. DCXXXV. DCXXXVIII., in regard to the stay of Du Guesclin in Aquitaine, cannot be correct. According to their statement, Du Guesclin remained ravaging the Limousin, and endeavouring to draw the Black Prince from the siege which he soon after laid to Limoges, till that siege terminated. Du Guesclin, however, could not have quitted the army of the Duke of Anjou till the end of August. He afterwards aided the Duke de Berry in the taking of Limoges, which could not have surrendered till some time in September, and at that time the Black Prince had not quitted Cognac. The siege of Limoges by the English, therefore, could not commence till late in September, and the place held out a month. At the same time, it is proved that Du Guesclin was in Paris, and had been created constable of France early in October; so that it is not only impossible that he should have been in Aquitaine when Limoges fell, but more than probable that he had quitted the principality before the siege began.

† 2d October, 1370. ‡ Froissart, chap. DCXXXIV.

§ Walsingham, Hist. Brev., pp. 179, 180.

held aloof from the main body of the English troops; and the near approach of Du Guesclin with a large army only served to increase the differences which existed in the English army.* Finding that a general engagement might easily be brought on with the French force, Robert Knolles ordered all the separate bodies of which his army was now composed to reunite, and despatched messengers to Hue de Calverly and several other commanders, who lay upon the frontiers of Anjou, announcing the probability of a battle, and begging their immediate aid.† Such tidings were received with joy by the English officers; and preparations were instantly made for joining the main body of the English near Le Mans. Even the leaders who took part with Sir John Menstreworth, Sir Thomas Grandison, Sir Gilbert Gifford, and Sir Geoffrey Warsley, now hastened to obey the commands they had formerly resisted, and set out at night to rejoin the forces of Sir Robert Knolles, accompanied by 200 men-at-arms and 6000 lighter troops.‡ Du Guesclin, however, had received intimation§ of all the proceedings of the English army; and at the small town of Pont Valin in Anjou the force of Sir Thomas Grandison and his companions were suddenly encountered by the constable. He was accompanied by double the number of

* Du Guesclin was accompanied by Oliver de Clisson, with whom he had just contracted, at Pontorson, a fraternity of arms, which is amongst the most singular instances of a singular custom on record. They bound themselves, for themselves and for their children, to aid and support each other against every one except the King of France, his brothers, the Viscount de Rohan, and some others, to divide everything which they acquired in war, and mutually to communicate everything which they heard contrary to the honour or interest of the other.—See Lobineau, tom. i. p. 395.

† Froissart, chap. DCXXXIX. ‡ Barnes, p. 810.

§ It has been supposed that Sir John Menstreworth communicated to Du Guesclin the intentions of Sir Robert Knolles, and the consequent movements of the British army.—Certain it is that he was personally inimical to his commanding officer,—that he escaped from the rencontre in which his companions were all either slain or taken,—that he afterwards brought a number of accusations against Knolles, which he failed to establish, and that he subsequently deserted to the French, was taken and executed for his treasons.—See Walsingham. Ipodigma Neustriæ, 133, et Hist. Brev. 180.

men which could be opposed to him; and, after a long and severe struggle, the English were totally defeated. Very few escaped from the field, and the news of this misfortune was brought to Sir Robert Knolles by the grooms and pages who had escaped from the battle on their masters' horses.* The loss of so great a part of his forces left the English general in no situation to maintain the field against Du Guesclin, and, retreating into Britanny, he terminated his bold expedition by disbanding his forces, and retiring to his own estates in that province.

In the mean while the news of the surrender of Limoges to the French had been communicated to Edward the Black Prince, whose wrath and indignation supplied for a time the place of those powers whereof sickness had deprived him. In the people of Limoges he had placed much confidence; in the bishop he had trusted still more firmly. That despicable traitor had been his favoured friend and companion, his frequent guest, and the godfather of his eldest son; and, at a moment when doubt and suspicion of the people of Aquitaine had become general at the English court, Edward had trusted him with more power in the important city of Limoges than was possessed even by the commander of the British garrison. He had requited the generosity and affection of his prince by being the first to betray his trust; and the anger felt by Edward, together with the irritability of sickness, taught him to forget that moderation and gentleness which had been one of the qualities that most distinguished his previous career.

Swearing by the soul of his father that he would make those who had delivered it to the enemy pay dearly for

* The historians of Britanny, and especially those of Du Guesclin, vary very much from each other, and from those of England, in regard to this battle, which took place on the road from Pont Valin to Château du Loir. Amongst other matters, they declare that Robert Knolles sent a herald to Du Guesclin demanding a general battle, and that the constable contrived to inebriate the messenger, so as to prevent his return to his employers until such a time as the design of the French was complete. This was not a very chivalrous exploit, was not at all consistent with the bold and fearless character of Du Guesclin, and is vouched by no authority of value.

their treachery, he forgot his illness in exertions to complete his preparations and take the field.

At no time during the preceding wars between France and England had personal hatred and revenge mingled so greatly in the feelings of both parties as was at present the case in Aquitaine. The English looked upon the hostile barons as revolted subjects and perjured vassals, and sought to punish as well as to conquer. The Gascon nobles considered the English alone in the light of foreign tyrants, whom it was laudable to destroy; while, at the same time, the galling consciousness of having taken oaths and broken them, and promised fealty which they had failed to keep, added the fury of self-condemnation to national hatred and the rage of jealous rivalry. Those Gascon lords, also, who maintained their faith to England, looked upon those who had failed in it with some degree of contempt, as wanting in truth; while it is probable that their opponents, feeling that no treaties could ever render them aught but French, reproached their more constant brethren with deficiency in loyalty and patriotism.

In this state of excited passions were the minds of all men in Aquitaine, when Edward the Black Prince, with 1200 men-at-arms, 1000 horse archers, and 3000 foot, began his march for Limoges.* He had previously, it would seem, sent a herald to summon the inhabitants to return to obedience, declaring solemnly that if they did not instantly submit and expel the French garrison, he would give up the place to the utmost fury of the soldiery.† Confident, however, in the strength of the fortifications, and the number of the French forces within, the inhabitants rejected his proposals, and, it is said, even treated his messengers with some indignity; and Edward, marching on, sat down before the place, vowing that he would never rise from beneath those walls till the city and all that it contained were in his power.

By this time his illness had increased so greatly that he was no longer able to perform the march on horseback, but, borne in a litter, he was carried at the head of his forces

* Froissart, chap. DCXXXIII.
† Walsingham, Historia Brevis, p. 180.

from Cognac to Limoges, and in the same state of corporeal feebleness conducted the operations of the siege. The inhabitants, we are told, now began to lose confidence; but the three principal leaders of the French garrison, John de Villemar, Hugh de la Roche, and Roger de Beaufort, kept up the courage of the more timorous by pointing out to them that the place was well provided against a long siege, and that their numbers and fortifications rendered any attempt to take the city by storm utterly hopeless. This fact was not unknown to the Black Prince, under whose orders, it would seem, a great part of the works had been constructed;* and he determined neither to waste his time in the long process of a blockade, nor to throw away the lives of his soldiers in fruitless efforts to carry the city by direct assault. His armies were usually accompanied by a large body of sappers and miners; and these were instantly put in operation against Limoges. Every means were employed by the garrison to impede the progress of the English engineers, but in vain: their advance was slow but continual; and though their operations required nearly a month to complete, at the end of that period their chief informed the prince that he was ready to give him entrance into the city at any hour he chose to name. The consummation was appointed for the following morning, and, shortly after dawn, the English army was drawn up in battle array before the walls. At the time appointed, the mine was sprung, and a large portion of the curtain rolled in ruins into the ditch. The inhabitants seem to have been totally unaware of their approaching fate: the English soldiers rushed in, the gates were forced open, the drawbridge cast down, and general bloodshed, massacre, and pillage commenced. An order to give no quarter had been pronounced by the prince himself; and, forgetting in his wrath all the nobler qualities of his nature, he was borne on through the reeking streets of Limoges, heedless of the cries and entreaties of the people, while women, and children, and old men, cast themselves before his litter, demanding mercy and compassion in vain. In the midst of the tumult the bishop was taken in his palace and dragged

* Barnes, p. 804.

before the prince, whose only greeting went to tell him that by God and St. George he would strike off his head.

Borne forward through the massacre, Edward showed no signs of human feeling, till the sight of knightly deeds and gallant daring, in the midst of the horror of such a scene, woke up the better spirit in his heart. The three French commanders, taken by surprise, had no time to organize any regular defence;* but, retreating with about eighty of their soldiers to one of the squares, they planted their banners before them, and placed their backs against a wall, prepared to sell their lives dearly to the conquerors. Here they were found by the Duke of Lancaster, the Earl of Cambridge, and the Earl of Pembroke, who were leading on one body of the assailants; and each commander singling out his adversary, the duke against Sir John de Villemar, and his brother opposed to Hugh de la Roche, while Lord Pembroke encountered Roger de Beaufort, a chivalrous combat began of three against three, which instantly stopped all farther hostilities in the vicinity. The English princes suffered none to interfere; "and ill would it have fared with him," says Froissart, "who had advanced at that moment." While his brothers were thus engaged hand to hand with the three French leaders, Edward the Black Prince was himself carried into the square, and paused to witness the combat; and, as he looked on, we are told, his fury melted away at the sight of those gallant feats of arms in which he was no longer destined to share himself. At length wearied out, and with no earthly chance of escape left, the French officers besought their opponents to allow them the right of arms, and suffer them to surrender. This was immediately granted; and from that moment the carnage ceased.†

* A curious trait of chivalrous modesty is recorded by Froissart in regard to Roger de Beaufort, the youngest of the three commanders. As they were making their dispositions for retreating into the square with the intention of dying there under their banners, John of Villemar put Beaufort in mind that he had not yet been dubbed, and offered to perform that good office for him that he might die a knight. The other, however, declined saying, "I am not yet sufficiently renowned, sir, to merit such an honour, though I thank you much for remembering it."

† Walsingham, Historia Brevis, p. 190.

Another act of vengeance still remained to be performed. After having been plundered of everything valuable that it contained, the city itself was burned to the ground by command of the Black Prince, who, having now for the last time "seen his desire upon his enemies," returned to Cognac, with his disease gaining each day some new step against all the struggles of a vigorous constitution. More than 3000 people, of all ages and conditions, are said to have fallen at the sack of Limoges; and this terrible deed, which would appear as a deep stain upon the memory even of a cruel and sanguinary man, gains an additional shade of darkness from its contrast with all the other actions of Edward Prince of Wales. The fact of the treason of part of its inhabitants, the fact of its having been taken without any offer to surrender, the fact of the exasperation of all parties at the moment, can hardly be received as any palliation of a premeditated act, which confounded the innocent with the guilty, and crushed the helpless with the strong; and it is the more painful to dwell upon as, without that one act of ferocious violence, Edward the Black Prince would have appeared in all his actions with beautiful consistence of character, blending the gentlest humanity with the most exalted courage. But one excuse can be offered for his conduct on this occasion, and that excuse is, perhaps, hypothetical; nevertheless, we are willing to admit it as far as possible, more especially as we find many strong reasons to believe that the powers of his mind had yielded under bodily suffering, and that he did not any longer possess that command over his own passions which is one of the noblest prerogatives of high intellect. We may believe that, before the fall of Limoges, Edward, through the fatal sickness which hung upon him, was no longer himself, and that he was now as much incapable of governing his anger or restraining his vengeance as he was of accomplishing the deeds of Cressy or of Poitiers. Certain it is, from the date of the taking of Limoges, his debility increased so rapidly, and his incompetence to the affairs of government and command appeared so great, that anxiety and consternation of the darkest character spread amongst the English adherents in Aquitaine.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE POPE VAINLY ENDEAVOURS TO OBTAIN A PEACE BETWEEN FRANCE AND ENGLAND.—INCREASING ILLNESS OF THE BLACK PRINCE.—DEATH OF HIS ELDEST SON EDWARD OF ANGOULEME.—THE PRINCE SAILS FOR ENGLAND.—THE ENGLISH FLEET DEFEATS THAT OF FLANDERS.—THE DUKE OF LANCASTER MARRIES THE DAUGHTER OF PETER KING OF CASTILLE.—THE EARL OF PEMBROKE SENT TO POITOU.—DEFEATED AND TAKEN OFF ROCHELLE BY THE FLEET OF SPAIN.—CONTINUAL SUCCESSES OF DU GUESCLIN.—EDWARD III. AND THE BLACK PRINCE SAIL TO RELIEVE THOUARS.—CANNOT REACH FRANCE, AND RETURN.—RELAPSE OF THE BLACK PRINCE.—GROWING INDOLENCE AND LUXURY OF THE KING.—MURMURS OF THE PEOPLE.—THE BLACK PRINCE PROCEEDS TO WESTMINSTER.—WISE MEASURES FOR RESTORING ORDER AND ECONOMY.—DEATH OF THE BLACK PRINCE.—CONCLUSION.

ALTHOUGH the voice of the Church of Rome had not been silent during the renewed wars between France and England, no effect had been produced by the exhortations of Pope Urban V.,* who, attributing in some degree the want of success which attended his negotiations to his distance from the scene of contention, prepared to leave Italy, in which he had now spent several years, and to return to the papal residence at Avignon.* To this step he is said to have been urged by the French cardinals, who, longing for the license and debauchery of Provence,† suggested the purer motive of restoring peace to the purer mind of that excellent pontiff, and succeeded in their views, notwithstanding the regret and remonstrances of all Italy.

The efforts of the pope, however, were in vain. Notwithstanding the fall of Limoges, the French king, encouraged by numerous small successes in Anjou and Poitou, saw ultimate triumph before him, and evaded the solicitations of the pontiff; while all that Urban could obtain from the Black Prince was the life of the traitor Bishop of Limoges, which was spared at his intercession.‡ He had

* Muratori, tom. iv. p. 456, ann. 1370.
† Petrach, Epist. xiii. lib. xiii.
‡ 19th December, 1370.

scarcely gained this object when his own life was brought to a close; and he died at Avignon, leaving a reputation of sanctity which was scarcely undeserved.

By this time the illness of the Black Prince had increased to such a degree that his presence was of no benefit to Aquitaine; while the only chance of even prolonging his life was judged to lie in his removal from the cares and disappointments of government, and from the climate in which he had already suffered so much, to a situation of repose, and to an air more congenial to his constitution. Under the advice of his surgeons he determined to return to his native land, which he had not seen for many years; and hurrying his preparations to that effect, he summoned all the nobles of the land who still adhered to the failing cause of England to visit him at Bordeaux, and take leave of the prince who had so often led them on to victory.

Ere his preparations were complete, however, he was destined to undergo a new and bitter grief in the death of his eldest son, Edward of Augoulême;* in the promise of whose infant years historians have been willing to see the seeds of those high qualities which distinguished his father and his grandfather,† and which were denied to his brother Richard II. The Black Prince, weak in body, and with a fleet prepared for his departure, was unable to attend or wait for the pompous obsequies which always followed the death of princes in those days; and leaving to his brothers the melancholy task of attending the funeral of his child, he held one more conference with the barons of Aquitaine, and embarked for England.

In his address to the lords of Gascony, he recapitulated, in simple and unostentatious terms, some of his actions since he had worn the ducal coronet which Eleanor of Aquitaine had first joined to the English crown: he told them the causes which induced him to retire for a time to England; and he besought them, not only to do homage to his brother the Duke of Lancaster, as his lieutenant, but to aid him with their best advice and most vigorous efforts, and to be true to him in the coming events, as they had already

* January, 1371.

† Rapin, vol. i. book x.

been true in the past.* The barons promised to obey, and did homage to the duke upon the spot; and Edward, quitting Bordeaux, accompanied by the Earl of Pembroke and a considerable body of troops, set sail from the shores of France, never to return.†

The fleet reached England in safety, and Edward instantly proceeded to join his father at Windsor, after which he retired to his palace at Berkhampstead, where his health for a time seemed gradually to improve. He mingled but little in public affairs, however; and his history from this period is but that of a long and lingering death.

Notwithstanding overtures towards a peace, which took place from time to time, the war proceeded constantly, and proceeded with unceasing disadvantage to England. One exception, indeed, took place, in the defeat of a fleet of Flemings off the coast of France, which proved of permanent advantage by detaching the people of Flanders from the cause of France,‡ towards which they had leaned since the marriage of the Duke of Burgundy to the daughter of their sovereign. The town of Montpaon also, and that of Moncontour had before this been taken by the English in Aquitaine. But, on the other hand, the town of Milau and that of Roche Vauclere, surrendered to Du Guesclin, and the fortress of Usson was besieged and taken: a great part of Poitou was lost by the revolt of the Lord of Pons, and almost the whole of Rouergue fell into the power of France.

In the midst of these misfortunes the Dukes of Lancaster and Cambridge, who had remained in Aquitaine,

* Froissart, chap. DCXLII.

† Froissart says, that he believes the Earls of Cambridge and Pembroke accompanied Edward; but Walsingham declares that the Earl of Cambridge remained in Aquitaine; and it appears that he was present at the funeral of Edward of Angoulême, which did not take place till after the departure of the Black Prince. We find, however, that the Earl of Pembroke was in England not long after the prince's return; and therefore I have adopted that part of the account given by Froissart.

‡ The war with the Flemings continued for several months; but the great loss their trade underwent from the English fleets induced them to conclude a treaty of peace on the 28th of March, 1372.

married the two orphan daughters of Peter the Cruel, King of Castille, who had been left in the hands of the Prince of Wales, as hostages for the good faith which that monarch so soon violated. The Duke of Lancaster, as husband of Constance, the elder, at once assumed the title of King of Castille; and the immediate consequence was a closer alliance between Henry of Transtamare and Charles V.,* and an active participation on the part of Henry in the war between England and France, of which he had hitherto been a passive though not indifferent spectator.

Shortly after his marriage, the Duke of Lancaster brought his bride to England,† seeking greater forces for the defence of Aquitaine, and more active assistance on the part of his native country. The Captal de Buch and several other Gascon lords were left behind for the protection of the land, though many influential persons accompanied John of Gaunt to England to represent to Edward more earnestly the deplorable condition of the rich province which had been ceded to him by the treaty of Bretigny. As that portion of Aquitaine which comprised Poitou had already suffered more than any other, and was in danger of being totally lost, the first efforts which the King of England was enabled to make were directed thither, and the Earl of Pembroke, with a fleet and army, was despatched to La Rochelle, as governor of Poitou. The counsels of England, however, found speedy transmission to the court of France;‡ and the King of Spain, being reminded of the alliance between himself and the French monarch, hastened to execute his part of the engagement. The Earl of Pembroke§ found his entrance into the harbour of Rochelle opposed by a Spanish fleet superior in number, in size, and in artillery, to his own; and a naval engagement, which lasted two days, commenced between the Spaniards and

* Froissart, chap. DCLV.

† Walsingham, Historia Brevis, p. 181.

‡ It is generally asserted, and seems to be undoubtedly true, that Charles V. maintained paid agents, both in the contitental territories of England and at the court of Edward himself; and it would appear clear that bribery to a great extent was used towards such of the Gascon nobles as went over to France after the first breaking out of the revolt.

§ Froissart, chap. DCLVIII., DCLIX., &c.

the English. The people of Rochelle, still French at heart, refused to give any aid to the nation, towards whose king they acknowledged an unwilling submission; and, after fighting for two days without a possibility of success, the English were totally defeated, and their commander taken.*

Joy to the French, and consternation to the English, were the natural consequences of this unusual event; but the cause of Edward in Aquitaine was more seriously affected by this defeat than would have been the case from the loss of an ordinary battle. The ship, containing treasure for raising new forces, and paying the troops of free companions, was captured by the Spaniards; and all hopes of any great efforts during the campaign of that year were put to an end amongst the adherents of England. The arrival of the Captal de Buch, the day after the engagement, kept down any disposition to revolt in Rochelle and the neighbouring districts; but with few troops and scanty supplies, the captal and his gallant companions could not defend every point of the territory left to their charge.

Du Guesclin, bold, indefatigable, and talented, was in the field before them, and Montmorillion, Chauvigny, and Lussac were taken in less than a week. Moncontour was also captured; and the hasty march of two bodies of Eng-

* There has been considerable difference of opinion in regard to the date of this battle, which the Spanish chronicles leave in doubt. It certainly took place on the 23d of June; but it is asserted by some that this great defeat of the English occurred in 1371, while others place it in 1372. The date, however, can be clearly established by collateral facts, although no contemporary has fixed it precisely. Thus it is proved that Sir Walter de Mauny died on the 15th of January, 1372, and that, on the 24th of April following, the famous Guichard d'Angle received the vacant riband of the garter, which that knight had held, he being then in England, to which country he had accompanied the Duke of Lancaster, on whom he had been in constant attendance since the departure of the Black Prince from Aquitaine. At the same time we find that, beyond all doubt, Guichard d'Angle was taken with Lord Pembroke in this engagement, which would be utterly inconsistent with the above facts if the battle took place in 1371; so that no legitimate doubt can exist in regard to the real date being 1372.

lish to Poitiers only saved that city from being assailed. Saint Severe, also, was besieged, and surrendered, after a gallant resistance, at the very moment that the Captal de Buch was marching to attempt its deliverance, by forcing Du Guesclin to a battle. While the two armies were within a few leagues of each other, however, news arrived at both camps that a mutiny had broken out in Poitiers; and detachments instantly set out from either force—the one to obtain entrance into the city, the other to repress the disaffected and repel the enemy. The tidings, however, had reached Du Guesclin first; and, ere the English reinforcements could arrive, the town was in the hands of the constable, who, with 300 men-at-arms, had ridden day and night to take possession of the gates which the disaffected had offered to deliver to him on his appearance.

A still greater reverse, however, was about to fall upon the English party in Aquitaine, by the capture of the famous Captal de Buch himself, who, with Thomas Percy, and a number of other distinguished officers, was taken in an ambuscade while endeavouring to throw a small reinforcement into the town of Soubise. The last officer who, in skill, judgment, and experience, could compete with Du Guesclin, was now lost to the King of England; and Charles V. of France was too well aware of the importance of his prisoner to suffer chivalrous precedents to induce him to receive a ransom for the Gascon chief. He kept him, we are told, in somewhat strict and harsh confinement, endeavouring by every means which a wily and unscrupulous monarch could use to detach him from the interests of England, and bind him to those of France. The gallant knight, however, supported his severity with fortitude, and repelled his offers with contempt; and, after having made many vain attempts to procure his liberation by the usual methods, held firm his faith, and died a prisoner.

Nothing had been wanting to induce the people of Rochelle to cast off the English yoke and call themselves French, but high bribes and a prospect of security. A French and Spanish fleet lay before the port, and all that remained was to conclude a treaty with the King of France, and overcome the English garrison which held the citadel. The treaty was soon concluded: the Rochellois obtained

everything they could desire; and the garrison, by an act of forgery and treachery which scarcely the license of war could palliate, were drawn forth under the pretext of a review, and taken prisoners by the citizens.*

In the mean time Du Guesclin pursued his conquests.† Almost the whole of Saintonge was in the hands of the French; the Rochellois was overrun; and at length the constable, with a large force, sat down before the strong city of Thouars, into which the greater part of the English adherents in Poitou had thrown themselves. After undergoing the siege of the French army for a few days, the garrison of Thouars found that it would be impossible to hold out the city against the whole power of France, unless some important and speedy succour could be afforded them from England; and they accordingly determined to treat with the French for a conditional surrender. The object of the garrison was accomplished without difficulty; and they entered into a convention with the adverse generals, whereby it was stipulated that unless the King of England or one of his sons appeared before the 29th of September‡ for the purpose of raising the siege, the city should be delivered up to France.

The fact of this treaty having been signed, and the consequences likely to accrue from the fall of Thouars, were immediately communicated to Edward III. The monarch, though a fatal indolence was now creeping over him, which gradually increased through his remaining days, saw that the loss of all which had been obtained by so many years of strife and bloodshed was likely to follow any delay in the present instance; and he exerted himself with energy

* 15th August, 1372.

† Almost all the historians of France and England have placed the commencement of the siege of Thouars posterior to the fall of Rochelle and the events which succeeded it; but it is scarcely possible that such should have been the case, as Rochelle surrendered to the French on the 15th of August, and on the 31st of that month Edward III. was at Sandwich, prepared to embark for France to the relief of Thouars, before which time the place must have been besieged and capitulated, the terms of the convention must have been sent to England, vessels must have been collected, troops levied, and the king must have proceeded from Windsor to the port, which is not possible, considering the time.

‡ Froissart, chap. DCLXXII.

to avert the coming evil.* He vowed that he would again land in France, and never more quit its shores till he had regained all or lost what still remained. Edward the Black Prince, now partially recovered from his illness, once more buckled on his armour: a general summons was issued to all the feudal retainers of the English crown to meet the monarch at Sandwich; and in the beginning of September,† Edward, accompanied by the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Lancaster, and the Earl of Cambridge, with 3000 men-at-arms and 10,000 archers, set sail for the shores of France.

The wind, which had so often favoured the English monarch, now, however, proved contrary; and after struggling for several weeks against the adverse elements, Edward found that the time stipulated for the relief of Thouars had expired, and that ere he could arrive, the loss which he had been hastening to avert would have occurred. With bitterness of heart, therefore, he determined to steer back to England, and give up all farther thoughts of an expedition which had already fruitlessly put the nation to an immense expense.

The disappointment of the monarch was fully shared by the Black Prince; and the exertion he had made to accompany his father, had either increased the malady under which he laboured, or had shown him what a powerful and indissoluble grasp the disease had obtained upon his constitution. From that moment he abandoned all hope of ever resuming the government or the defence of the continental territories which his father had conferred upon him; and his first act after his return was to surrender,‡ into the monarch's hands, the rich but ill-fated principality of Aquitaine, the fields of which had been fattened with the blood of the noblest of two chivalrous nations. From this period his thoughts seem to have been directed to avert from England the evils which the decay of his father's powers both

* 31st August, Rymer, tom. vi. p. 748.

† Edward apparently sailed on the 1st of September, 1372. The last paper signed with his own hand to be found in Rymer prior to the 28th October, is dated 31st August. Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. pp. 962, 963, ed. 1830.

‡ 5th October, 1372. Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 974, ed. 1830.

mental and corporeal seemed likely to produce, and to secure the rights of his son Richard against the ambition and intrigues of those, whose sense of justice was doubtful, and whose opportunities of evil might be great. With the prophetic instinct of parental affection, Edward the Black Prince seems to have foreseen the many ills that were to beset the throne of his child, and to have guarded against them with more than usual precaution. Whether it was that he had already perceived some traits of weakness in the character of the youthful prince, or that he dreaded the ambition of his brothers, he appears to have been profoundly convinced that some after struggle for the crown would take place, and that the title of his son would be called in question, although the rule of succession to the throne of England had been established by precedents which left no legitimate doubt. To give force to those precedents, by causing them to be acknowledged in the case of his son, Edward had already taken various judicious steps, the most important of which preceded the unsuccessful expedition undertaken for the relief of Thouars. After long consultations with his father, the Black Prince presented himself before the parliament then sitting, and taking advantage of the approaching enterprise, in order to account for the proposal he was about to make, without assuming that the faith or loyalty of any one was to be doubted, he pointed out that in the course of war his own life or that of his father, or both, might be brought to a sudden termination, and expressed a strong desire that, ere he embarked, the succession to the throne, though unquestioned, might be formally settled by parliament upon his son Richard.

Great satisfaction was shown by all the estates of the realm at a suggestion which was likely to avert future strife and contestation, and the proposal was instantly attended to, and received the sanction of parliament. The commons holding up their hands voted in a body that the right of succession to the British throne existed in Richard Plantagenet, in default of his father and grandfather; and the king, his sons, and the lords spiritual and temporal, swore to maintain the right of that prince in case of his father's decease. A formal act to that effect was drawn up, to which each peer affixed his seal and signature; and on

the departure of the expedition, Richard was appointed custos of the realm during the absence of the sovereign.*

On the return of the fleet, Edward the Black Prince retired once more to Berkhampstead, and during the four succeeding years devoted himself entirely to seclusion. Finding himself incapable of personally superintending the education of his son Richard, a task which required in those days no slight corporeal exertion, he confided that duty to his companion in arms and attached adherent Guichard d'Angle, as soon as his liberation could be procured† after the unfortunate defeat of the Earl of Pembroke; and no one could be better qualified than he was, at least in a chivalrous point of view, to supply to the young prince the place of his dying father. Day after day the Black Prince's strength failed, and it would appear from a contemporary chronicle, that he was often supposed to be dead by those who surrounded him.‡ From these fainting fits he recovered it is true, with false appearances of returning health; but still his energies decreased; and the whole of those dominions on the continent which had been ceded to Edward III. by the treaty of Bretigny, with the exception of Calais, were one by one wrested from the English, without calling the dying prince again into activity. A truce succeeded between the two crowns,§ and the Duke of Lancaster, who had obtained a great ascendency over the weakness of his father's age, returned to England, and for some time ruled the councils of Edward III. to the disadvantage of the country and the disgust of the people. The lamentable spectacle was now presented to the world of one who had been the greatest monarch of his time forgetting, in the dotage of his

* Barnes, p. 884. Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 962.

† Sir Guichard d'Angle was delivered in exchange for the Lord of Roye, apparently in 1373, though Froissart places it in 1374 (chap. DCLXXXVIII.); and we learn the fact of Richard's education having been confided to him from some very curious fragments of an unpublished MS. of Froissart, extracted and printed by M. Buchon. The words are, "Le jone Richard fil dou Prince qui estait en le garde et doctrine de ce gentil et vaillant chevalier Monseigneur Guichart d'Angle."

‡ See the very interesting chronicle published by T. Amyot, Esq. in the 22d vol. of the Archæologia, p. 227.

§ Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. pp. 1022, 1031, &c.

age, the qualities which had distinguished him through life, and casting away from him the virtues which had elevated him as a man, as well as the energies which had distinguished him as a monarch. Activity had now been exchanged for indolence in the character of the British king, and liberality and splendour had deviated into weak luxury and childish ostentation. Selecting from amongst the ladies of his late queen a woman less distinguished for worth than for beauty, named Alice Perrers, he conferred upon her the uneviable distinction of royal concubine,* gave her the jewels of his virtuous wife,† and outraged public decency by making her his companion at all the sports and spectacles of the day.‡ Nations love not to be so insulted, and hatred not only followed the object of the king's dotage, but attached itself to the Duke of Lancaster, who suffered and encouraged the power and peculation of the concubine, and the extravagance, waste, and luxury of the king. It is not improbable that the influence of the duke was aided by that of the mistress; but at all events they were coupled together in public detestation, and the clergy stigmatized the duke and his supporters as encouragers of the Lollards, calling in religious intolerance to aggravate popular hatred.

However strict the retirement to which he confined himself—however near might be the approach of death—such a state of things could not remain concealed from the Black Prince. The wasted treasures and resources of the country which was soon to be swayed by his only child, the degradation of his father, the ambition and misconduct of his brother, and the indignant murmurs of his fellow-countrymen, roused the prince to one last effort; and though a burning fever now poured its flaming current through his

* Stow, p. 421. † Rymer, tom. iii. part ii. p. 989.

‡ Barnes, in his History of Edward III., defends the virtue of Alice Perrers or Pierce, but he is not at all successful in that chivalrous enterprise. The words in which Stow records one of the spectacles in which she was so disgracefully made to figure are as follow: "The 48 of Edward III. Dame Alice Perrers or Pierce, the king's concubine, as lady of the sunne, rode from the Tower of London, through Cheape, accompanied by many lords and ladies, every lady leading a lord by his horse bridle, till they came into West Smithfield, and then began a great just, which endured seven days after." Stow's Survey, p. 421.

veins, he determined to be present at the parliament summoned to meet on the 28th of April 1376. It is impossible to trace exactly how great a share his wisdom and influence had in the just and prudent proceedings that followed; but all historians seem to agree that the wiser members of the parliament derived strength of purpose and unanimity of design from the presence and countenance of the prince: and the fact that the greater part of the provisions made at this time were annulled immediately after his death, has caused even the details to be ascribed with much apparent justice to the Black Prince *

While granting Edward III. liberal supplies, the parliament remonstrated in unequivocal terms against the waste which had taken place, and the peculation which had been permitted; and required, in a manner at once unceremonious and imperative, that a council of ten or twelve persons should be appointed to aid, or rather control, the decayed king in the government of the realm. Measures were also taken to remove Alice Perrers, Lord Latimer, and several other obnoxious persons from the court: it was provided that no woman should, for corrupt motives, move any cause in any of the king's courts; and a strict inquiry into the malversation of the public treasure was commenced.

In the midst of these proceedings, however, the disease under which Edward the Black Prince laboured triumphed over the last struggles of a vigorous constitution; and on the day preceding Trinity Sunday the approach of death became evident. Although there is reason to believe that

* See Archæologia, vol. 22, where the efforts of the dying prince to put a stop to the peculation which was going forward are detailed in the contemporary chronicle published by Mr. Amyot. One Richard Lyons is said to have sent the Black Prince "a barill of gould, as if it had been a barill of sturgeon, to purchase his good favour; but when the present was tendered, the prince did utterly refuse it, answering in this manner, that which is in the barill is resty and no way profitable, for it is neither well nor truly gotten." It would seem that though the prince refused, the king accepted it; and Lyons remained unpunished. It would appear that both in order to be nearer to the king and the parliament Edward the Black Prince did not proceed to his own house, which was in Fish Street Hill, and still standing in 1633 (Stow's Survey, p. 233), but took up his abode in the Royal Palace at Westminster.

he had more than once executed testamentary papers of different kinds previous to this period, an entire new will was drawn up for the prince, leaving a number of legacies, which would be tedious to enumerate, and giving particular directions in regard not only to his burial but even to the most minute particulars concerning the tomb which was to be erected over him in the cathedral church of Canterbury. The care evinced in this document for all his domestics and retainers is great, and shows the same kind and noble spirit which distinguished his actions throughout his life, while the appointment of his brother, the Duke of Lancaster, as one of his eight executors,* considering the moment at which the deed was executed, is a curious trait of a heart on which suspicion and apprehension could take but little hold. The will contains nothing farther worthy of remark, except inasmuch as it shows, by the recapitulation of a part of the furniture and effects belonging to the Black Prince at the time of his death, the state of luxury and splendour to which England had at this time arrived.

After the signature of his will, Edward lingered through the following night: but the next day, Trinity Sunday,† the 8th June, 1376, he terminated a life which during several years had been but one sad prolongation of suffering. His father and the people of England mourned a loss, which, had his energies remained unimpaired, would have been justly called irreparable; and though the latter years of his life had been little serviceable to his country, his countrymen could not fail to grieve for the death of one on whom their hopes and expectations had been fixed from his earliest years; who had, while life was granted him, fulfilled those hopes by contributing more than any man that ever lived to increase the national glory, and who had preserved, unabated, to the grave, the love with which his

* The other seven were William of Wickham, Bishop of Winchester; the Bishop of Bath; the Bishop of St. Asaph; Robert Walsham his confessor, Hugh Seagrave his steward; Sir Alan Stokes, and Sir John Fordham.

† Walsingham places the death of the Black Prince in July, but the account of Froissart, who names Trinity Sunday, is confirmed by the inscription on a fillet of brass forming part of his monument in Canterbury.

father's subjects had regarded him from his birth. To Edward himself it is probable that death came as a relief; for he had outlived so many blessings that he could only hope for tranquillity in the tomb. Health had left him; the strength for which he had once been famous had sunk to infant weakness; the gay tournament which had been the joy of his youth, and the battle-field which had afforded its mighty inspiration to his maturer years, were closed to him for ever; the territories he had won by a few splendid efforts had been wrung piecemeal from those for whom they were acquired. Victory and conquest, and blood and treasure, and invaluable time, had been expended in vain, and he had lived to see the result of all his deeds reduced to the immortal glory of his name, and the dreamlike memory of immense advantages obtained and lost. We may well suppose that he felt weary of the world; and with the exception of the few strong domestic ties, the breaking of which must have been painful to a heart like his, we may believe that he quitted life without regret.

His body, after lying in state, remained unburied till the following September, when the court and the parliament followed in solemn procession to witness its interment in the cathedral of Canterbury. The tomb which he had described in his will, with some slight variations, was erected over his body, and the armour which had clothed him in battle was suspended above it, while on several parts of the monument were inscribed the words "Houmont," High Spirit, and "Ich diene,"* I serve; mottoes

* Ich diene may, by a somewhat forced construction, be rendered "I am needful," as the best German philologists admit one of the ancient senses of the verb "dienen" to be "nützen." This, however, brings us no nearer to the application of the word in the present instance. I see that it is asserted in a very clever little treatise on some points relating to the Black Prince, in the 46th part of the Library of Entertaining Knowledge, that the words "ich diene" are first found upon the tomb of the Black Prince, and that they never appear upon his seals. If Barnes have quoted Sandford, lib. iii, cap. iv. p. 185, rightly, this is an error. He says that a seal bearing two ostrich feathers, with "ich diene" thereunto attached, is affixed to the grant of La Roche sur Yonne made by Edward the Black Prince to his brother the Duke of Lancaster, 8th October, 1370. See Barnes, p. 806. I have not

singularly combined, and though of uncertain origin, expressing the two most esteemed virtues of chivalry,—valour and modesty.

Charles, King of France, affected to feel deep grief for the death of the warrior he had ceased to fear; and a solemn funeral service was celebrated in Paris for the repose of him who could no longer trouble the tranquillity of France. Had such an action been performed by a chivalrous king, it might have been justly looked upon as a chivalrous tribute to departed worth, even in an enemy; but enacted by one who was chivalrous in nothing, and hypocritical in so many things, hypocrisy may reasonably claim it as her own.

If any prince ever merited the regret of a chivalrous age, the sorrow which all people displayed for his death* was well deserved by Edward, called, from what cause we know not, the Black Prince.† Combining in his own person all the nobler qualities and few of the vices which are supposed to have characterised the days of knighthood, brave, yet gentle, skilful yet modest, an affectionate and unvarying friend, a master easily served, a generous adversary, a prince at once dignified and gracious, he left behind him a character unstained by any imputation of that licentiousness which is the prevailing reproach against the manners of the age, and a reputation for mildness and hu-

the opportunity of verifying the quotation, but I have never yet discovered that Barnes is wrong in any direct reference to another author.

* It is stated that on receiving news of the death of the Black Prince his gallant companion the Captal de Buch abandoned himself entirely to despair, and died, refusing to take the nourishment necessary for his support.

† Some have supposed that the colour of his usual surcoat gave rise to this denomination. Others have more poetically attributed it to the fact of his having brought black days upon the land of France. The first, however, would seem the most probable method of accounting for his having received the name by which he is now so universally known. It was a very common custom of the times to designate knights by the colour of their arms, and in some instances the real name is almost entirely lost in the fictitious one. Thus, shortly after the days of the Black Prince, we find a person called the Green Knight continually mentioned in the old chronicles, while his real name is scarcely to be met with.

manity established by a thousand instances of forbearance and mercy, and only qualified by one recorded act of that cruelty which casts a general shade upon the warriors of those times.

His profusion, which, though then considered as a virtue, we now more justly regard as a vice, was not of a selfish or degrading character. It would have been liberality, had it been confined within just bounds, and it is scarcely possible to avoid looking upon it with regret rather than condemnation. Its punishment, too, was severe, inasmuch as there can be no doubt that it contributed, as well as the breach of faith committed by the King of Spain, to produce the necessity of the tax called *fouage*. Although that tax was undoubtedly the pretext and not the cause of the revolt in Aquitaine, and although Edward had the consciousness of having used none but lawful and just means either to impose or levy it, nevertheless a heart so capable of kind and gentle feelings as his was proved to be by many other circumstances, could not but be pained at affording even a pretence for resistance and rebellion. Personal enmity, however, and national hatred, and the eager animosity of those who strove to justify their own breach of faith towards him, could find no charge to bring against him more heavy than that he sought to make the nobility of Aquitaine share in the burden he was obliged to impose upon the commons. His character, as a man and as a knight, envy and hatred themselves did not attempt to impeach; and his kindness, his gentleness, his liberality, and his general sense of justice, were not denied even by his enemies. Complaint itself seems to have been stifled by his death: in the after negotiations for peace, the affairs of the Gascon barons appear almost forgotten; and from the time that the grave closed over his head every one seems to have acknowledged, to use the words of the old chronicler, that "the valiant and the gentle Prince of Wales was the flower of all chivalry in the world at that time."*

The events which followed form no part of this history. After innumerable struggles, the whole of Aquitaine was

* This expression is found in an old manuscript of Froissart in the royal library at Paris, No. 926.

lost to England, and reannexed to that country of which it was an integral and legitimate part. Happy would it have been for England had she known, happy would it be for monarchs would they see, that nature announces to the world what are to be the true limits of countries by the geographical barriers which she places around them. Conquest is impotent, and resistance is vain, where a stronger hand than that of man has fixed the boundary of particular territories; and the history of every warlike age tends but to show that nations may be subdued and held in subjection,—that kingdoms may be divided, and the partition may be durable,—but that a portion dismembered from a country, of which geographical circumstances designate it as a part, will always eventually reunite itself to the land from which it is unnaturally severed.

APPENDIX

TO

THE SECOND VOLUME.

COTTON MS. CALIGULA. D. III. Original. Fo. 48.

Copie de la lettre le Roi de Navarre envoiee au duc de Lancastre.

Trescher et tres aime cousin Je vous escriz nadgaires par mes lettres coment et par queles causes jay fait mourir Charles Despaigne jady connestable de France et vous requerroie par ycelles sur amour lignage et tout le bien vous me povez vouloir quil vous plest venir tantost a Guysnes ou a Caleis au plus effortement de genz darmes et d archiers que vous pourriez pur estre tout prest de moi aider et secourir tantost que je le vous ferroie savoir. Si veulliez savoir trescher cousin que depuis que mon message qui vous portoit les dites lettres se parti de moi le Roi a envoie devers moi certaines messages savoir si je avoueroie le fait. Et je lai avouee plainement; disant que je en ma personne y ai este et le fait faire et ce est verite si ai sceu que pur ce le Roi me veult trop de mal et m entent a porter domage; et si ai este avisee par aucuns mes amis que sil me poet tenir soit par voie de traictie ou autrement il me courroucera de corps et des biens et a dit qil me desheritera et touz le miens. Mais trescher cousin je men pense a garder et deffendre de tout mon povoir et ai ferme entencion de soustenir en ce mon fait contre lui et touz autres qui pur ce voudrient entreprendre contre moi si hautment et si avant que mon honneur y serra sauf a l ayd de dieu de vous et de mes autres bons amis, et mesment de vous, qui estes lun des principals par qui je voudroie plus gouverner corps et honneur. Pourquoi trescher cousin je vous prie si acertes come plus puis et si vous en requier par lignage et sur lamour et tout le bien que vous me povoz onqes vouloir, ausi come autrefoiz ai fait que hastivement ces lettres veues vous vous voillez traire es ditz lieux de Guynes ou de Calais et illoqes vous faire et tenir le plus fort de gentz darmes et archiers que vous pourriez juger a fin de venir tantost en Normandie pour moi aider prestement et secourir ou de faire guerre par dela quant je le vous ferrai savoir ou si tost que vous orrez nouvell que le Roi aura commence a moi damager. Et de

ce trescher cousin ne me veulliez faillir, quar a ceste foitz en cest present fait, ou mon corps mon estat et m onneur dependent, il mest bien mestier dauoir laide de mes bons amis et de les noz noistre et dieux sceit que en tiel cas je ne vouldroie espargner corps ne chevance envers eux. Trescher cousin je escrie sur ceste matiere a mes treschers cousins le Roy Dengleterre et le Prince de Gales ensi come vous verrez par copie de leurs lettres que je vous envoie cy dedeinz encloses. Si vous prie moult cherement que mes vous leur voulliez envoier sans delai par un votre message qar il purra et mieltz seurement passer que message que jeo y envoiasse. Et trescher cousin vous povez bien voie le busoigne quil en est si ne men veulliez faillir quar deux sceit que sur touz je me fie en vous de mon corps mon honneur et mon estat. Trescher et tresame cousin sur ce chose me veulliez brievement rescrire votre bonne volente. Le seint esprit vous eit en sa seinte garde. Donne a Evreux le xviij jour de Januer.

COTTON MS. CALIGULA. D. III. Fo. 47.

Le copie de la lettre le Roi de Navarre envoiee a notre Seigneur le Roi.

Treschers et tresame cousin. Je vous escripse nadgaires coment et pour queles causes jay fait mourir Charles Despaigne jadis Connestable de France et vous requeroie par mes lettres sur amour lignage et tout le bien que vous me poyez voulir que contre ses parentz ou amis qui aucune chose vouroient entreprendre contre moi pur le dit fait lequele je pense a soustenir et y garder mon estat et mon honneur a laide de dieu de vous et mes autres bons amis vous me voulisissez aider conforter et secourir de tout votre efforts si tost que je le vous feroie assavoir. Si veulliez savoir trescher cousin que depuis que mon message qui vous portoit les dictes lettres et au quel javoie chargie a vous dire aucunes choses de bouche se partie de moi, le Roi ad envoie devers moi certaines messages pur savoir si je voudroie avouer le fait. Et vraiment trescher cousin je lai avouee plainment; disant que je en ma personne y ai este et lai fait faire, et ce est verite. Si ai seu que pur ce le Roi me voet trop de mal et quil entent a moy porter damage et si suy avisez par aucuns mes amis que sil me puet tenir par queconqe voie soit de traitie aimable ou autrement il me courroucera du corps et des biens et a dit qil desheritera de tout moi et les miens. Mais trescher cousin je men pense bien a garder a laide de dieu de vous principalment et mes autres bons amis; car jay bon droit et si jay de beaux et bons chateux en Normandie et ailloures tous bien garniz et bien appareillez et certes sil comence je lui porterai tiel damage qil amendra jamais. Pur quoi trescher cousin a cestefoiz je vous requier sur quanque je puisse requeser, soit par lignage par amour et en tant que vous

THE END